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THE

MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND.

A

TRAGEDY

IN FIVE ACTS.

EIGENTHUM DER STADT AUGSBURG

AS IT IS ACTED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY RICHARD CUMBERLAND, ESQ.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXXXIII.

PROLOGUE.

DEEP in a labyrinth, remote from view,
Fame's temple ſtands, and Faſhion holds the clue;
Before the entrance rang'd, a ſuppliant band
Of candidates invoke her guiding hand:
In burſts the throng, a thouſand different ways
They ſpread, wind, double thro' the puzzling maze:
Vain labor his who on himſelf relies,
Where none but Faſhion's favorites gain the prize!
Sad omen for our poet! who has choſe
The narrow groveling path of humble proſe;
A path indeed, which Moore and Lillo trode,
And reach'd Parnaſſus by the bridle road:
Brambles and thorns oppoſe, and at our ſide
Nature alone, and ſhe a naked guide.
Patrons of nature, from your tears impart
Balm to her wounds, and heal her at your heart.
Now parody has vented all its ſpite,
Let tragedy reſume her antient right:
When Britain's lion roars in martial mood,
Throw to the kingly beaſt a ſop of blood;
Loud in his ear your tragic thunders roll,
And rouſe the mighty terrors of his ſoul:
When peace, with every liberal ſcience join'd,
Decrees a joyful ſabbath to mankind,
Let comedy reſtore the court of wit,
And open a new ſeſſions in the pit.
Pageants and pantomimes have ſpent their rage,
And emptied the whole wardrobe on the ſtage:
Lord Mayors of London clubb'd with Gods of Greece,
And Biſhop Blaize comb'd Jaſon's golden fleece;
Whilſt ſlipſhod taylors on their treſſel boards,
Of the Nine Muſes ſate the croſs-legg'd lords;
Let a plain bard, in ſpite of Faſhion, aim
By Nature's aid to find his way to fame:
To his domeſtic tale incline your ear,
Wives, huſbands, children! you may ſafely hear.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

Lord Davenant - -	Mr. HENDERSON.
Charles Davenant -	Mr. LEWIS.
Sir Edmund Travers	Mr. YATES.
Captain Dormer - -	Mr. WROUGHTON.
Sir Harry Harlow -	Mr. AICKIN.
Paget - - - -	Mr. FEARON.

Lady Davenant - -	Miſs YOUNGE.
Marianne - - -	Miſs SATCHELL.
Waiting Woman -	Miſs PLATT.

Lord Davenant's Servants, &c.

TIME, *the Repreſentation.*

SCENE, *London.*

THE

THE MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *An Apartment in* Lord Davenant's *Houſe.*

Enter Lord Davenant.

Lord D. DID ever man miſtake his happineſs as I have done? am I by nature fitted for a huſband? am I by temper qualified to be a gameſter? and yet (a plague upon my folly!) I am both: in both I've doubled ſtakes, and play'd the loſing game; married a wife for money, and a wife for love; and now nor love nor money will get rid of either: upon my right hand and my left a plague; overhead ruin impends; under-foot lurks diſcovery. A ſituation that admits no choice, but choice of miſeries. As to my Lady Davenant here, if

ever man was puniſh'd in a faultleſs wife, it is my fate to be that man; with beauty to attract, affections to aſſiſt temptation, ſtill ſhe ſtands upon a rock of virtue; nor can I, by the narroweſt ſearch, explore a crack or cranny, where the ſlighteſt levity might enter, to throw down her barriers, and make way for my eſcape: —when a wife's indiſcretion will not ſave me, well may I rail at fortune; 'tis hard to loſe upon a caſt, where every chance was in my favour.— Now, Paget, before I talk to you, ſhut the door.

Enter Paget, *and ſhuts the door.*

What have you diſcover'd in Lady Davenant ſince we laſt conferr'd?

Paget. Nothing.

Lord D. No doubt you have watch'd her—

Paget. Cloſely.

Lord D. Where has ſhe been? whom has ſhe ſeen? what has ſhe done?

Paget. The journal of one day is the journal of her life: if I had the eyes of a hawk (and mine are none of the dulleſt) I could not ſpy a flaw in Lady Davenant.

Lord D. Incredible! Are not you an attorney, and is not ſhe a woman? have not I ſet you as a ſpy upon her perſon; cas'd the body of a lawyer in the livery of a ſervant; and, after three months paſt and more, will you perſuade me, that you have diſcovered, what the world never knew, a wife without a flaw? I'll not believe it.

Paget.

Paget. Why then, my Lord, you muſt ev'n ſtrip my livery off my back, and diſmiſs me to my parchments.

Lord D. You will find flaws enough in them: of this I'm ſure, if any thing can outwit a lawyer, it muſt be the devil; therefore, Paget, I conclude againſt her Ladyſhip's ſanctity. What do you tell me? has this great city loſt its temptations, or reform'd its morals? There are a hundred fine men of the town, who ſay ſhe is the fineſt woman in it.

Paget. Yes; and ſwear it too: but ſhe won't believe 'em.

Lord D. She was credulous enough, when I told her ſo.

Paget. 'Twas a great weakneſs; but ſhe is wiſer than ſhe was.

Lord D. Does Sir Harry Harlow make no way? He is a faſhionable man, and came on with all the gallantry of a Frenchman.

Paget. Yes, and went off like a Frenchman; he'll not rally any more; we have orders never to admit him—ſhe is in frequent converſation with your ſon.

Lord D. I have remark'd it, and ſhall ſtop their interviews.

Paget. She has been collecting a ſum—

Lord D. What is that for?

Paget. That's more than I can tell: I ſold ſome trinkets for her of her uncle's giving, and exchanged ſome money into notes this morning.

Lord D. I paid her quarter's pin-money but yeſterday :—this muſt be look'd into.

Paget. Yes, we may look ; but it is ſeeking for day-light with a dark-lanthorn : malice cannot ſpy a fault in her ; miſchief cannot make one ; and if I might offer my advice, it ſhould be to deſiſt from any further pains in the attempt : 'tis merely loſs of labour, take my word for it.

Lord D. To ſay the truth, I begin to be of your opinion ; but till a better plan can be ſtruck out, we muſt perſiſt in this : you know my reaſons, Paget ; you alone, of all mankind, are in the ſecret of that fatal ſtep, which trains me on in infamy and error. If Lady Davenant was in fact, as ſhe is in law, my only wife, I would not act as now ; but whilſt that ſecond marriage in Flanders with Miſs Dormer draws off my heart, and keeps me under terror of diſcovery, if I can't find occaſion for a divorce, I muſt make it.

Paget. 'Tis plain your paſſion for Miſs Dormer ſtill ſubſiſts, elſe her perſuaſion of your death, her ignorance of your name and ſtation, and the precautions we have taken to prevent diſcovery, make theſe meaſures needleſs.

Lord D. I wiſh I ſaw it in that light ; but what ſecurity have I againſt Miſs Dormer's coming over ? what againſt her marrying again, believing, as ſhe does, that I am dead ?—that were a ſtroke that I ſhould doubly feel. Another danger threatens me ; her brother Dormer may return

return from ſea: his former paſſion for my Lady Davenant, and gratitude for my ſervices in getting him a ſhip, will expoſe me to his viſits: and I would ſooner meet the devil than the man I've wrong'd ſo deeply.

Paget. 'Twou'd not be pleaſant, I confeſs; but ſurely 'twas reported he was kill'd in action with an enemy's ſhip in the Eaſt Indies.

Lord D. Wounded, not kill'd:—But hark! my Lady's coming.—Vaniſh! [*Exit* Paget. Good morning to you, Lady Davenant;—dreſs'd ſo early!

Lady Davenant.

Lady D. 'Tis my uncle's day for viſiting, and I made myſelf ready to receive him.

Lord D. Come, come, that ſtudied elegance of dreſs can never be put on to receive an uncle; you had ſome better object in your eye than old Sir Edmund Travers.

Lady D. Perhaps I had.

Lord D. Why that's ſincere; I know you do not ſet yourſelf in ſuch array for family viſitors.

Lady D. I own it; but a ſtranger, and a favourite too—when ſuch a one is in the caſe—

Lord D. Ay, then you arm at every point for conqueſt: but this ſtranger—tell me, who is he?

Lady D. Who is a greater ſtranger than your Lordſhip? If I'm arm'd for conqueſt, here's the heart I aim at,

Lord

Lord D. Pſhaw! this is trifling; theſe are words in courſe. If man and wife keep forms, 'tis all that is requir'd; but to pretend a paſſion, and talk of love to a huſband—'tis an affectation that lowers your underſtanding, but cannot impoſe upon mine. In the name of reaſon, Lady Davenant, make yourſelf an agreeable wife, but do not ſink into that moſt inſipid of all characters, a good ſort of woman.

Lady D. And what is your deſcription of a good ſort of woman?

Lord D. She is one that keeps the commandments, hears ſermons, talks a little innocent ſcandal, and ſcolds the ſervants.

Lady D. Now tell me your receipt for an agreeable wife.

Lord D. An agreeable wife to a man of the world is a woman of the world; one who follows her own purſuits, and does not croſs thoſe of her huſband. Let me ſpeak to you with ſincerity—we married for convenience; there is a diſparity in our ages; I was a widower, with a ſon as old as yourſelf; you an orphan girl of fortune, a ſlave to the humours of your uncle: you purchaſed liberty by the ſacrifice of inclination.

Lady D. How does that appear, my Lord?

Lord D. Beyond a doubt; you know your heart was never mine; you know you was in love with Dormer; would have married him; was thwarted in your firſt affection, and took me

upon duty—I might have ſaid upon compulſion; for I was your uncle's choice, not your's.

Lady D. Hold there, whilſt I declare to you, in truth of heart, if Dormer had not given me up,—unkindly given me up—it was not duty, no, nor yet compulſion, ſhould have forced me to renounce him.

Lord D. I give you credit for a fair confeſſion, and I draw this natural concluſion from it: —The woman who has loved, will love again— I am content. Let me ſpeak plainly to you: you are young, handſome, ſenſible, ſuſceptible: I am declining from the prime of life, a lover of my eaſe, and, I confeſs to you, not over uxorious. Why ſhould we reſtrain each other? Why ſhould marriage, that ſtrikes off other women's fetters, put on your's? live as women of your rank live; let your life be neither that of a town libertine, nor this, which you now lead, of a matrimonial mope.

Lady D. I underſtand you, my Lord: but if I am better pleaſed to ſubmit to the chagrin of your neglect, than to the reproaches of my own conſcience, you will ſuffer me to purſue a dull choice, and be the object of your contempt, rather than of my own. I'll not diſguiſe from you that my heart is made for love, ſoft and ſubject to temptation; therefore I avoid it: it once belonged to Dormer; he returned it wounded, bleeding to its owner; 'twas healed, made whole, and offered to Lord Davenant; if you will

will not receive it, you may ſend it back to me, as Dormer did; but you ſhall never make it common property, aſſure yourſelf.

Lord D. Well, let that paſs. I have a queſtion, to which I beg your anſwer, without evaſion or reſerve.

Lady D. Propoſe it.

Lord D. What has paſſed of late between your Ladyſhip and my ſon? You have been cloſeted more than once; what have you conferred upon?

Lady D. Am I bound to tell that?

Lord D. Indiſpenſably; I charge you on your duty; if you will put yourſelf on your defence, defend yourſelf. I have remarked a ſullenneſs in Captain Davenant, that does not pleaſe me; a darkneſs and reſerve not proper; and I ſuſpect your Ladyſhip of being party in the occaſion.

Lady D. No, no, if ever I am forc'd to make my ſorrows known, it will not be to your ſon I ſhall ſpeak unfavourably of his father.

Lord D. No matter; tell me what paſs'd.

Lady D. Read then, and ſatisfy your doubts.

[*Gives him a letter.*

Lord D. (Reads)

" Dear Charles,

" As it may be inconvenient to your father " to furniſh you with the purchaſe-money for " your majority, accept this trifle in aid from " your ever affectionate,

" Louiſa Davenant."

Confuſion!

Confuſion! —— let me ſee; five hundred pounds!—your Ladyſhip is very bountiful to Captain Davenant; and very conſiderate, as you would have it appear, of his father's pocket. If you had ſtudied the neceſſities of that, Madam, why might not your bounty paſs through my hands? how know you I approve of this? how can you tell but other calls may be more urgent with me than this of a commiſſion for my ſon? what if I have duns of honour now at my door? what if I have play-debts, that cannot be put aſide? will you unſtring your purſe; empty your hoard of pin-money for me?—I do not find you will.

Lady D. 'Tis in your hands; diſpoſe of it as you ſee fit.

Lord. D. And I do ſee fit to diſpoſe of mine and my ſon's concerns without your Ladyſhip's advice or interference: I ſhall alſo expect, and ſtrictly require, that you do not talk and cabal with my ſon upon any thing that now paſſes, ever did paſs, or ever ſhall paſs, between you and me upon the ſubject.

Servant *introduces* Sir Edmund Travers.

Serv. Sir Edmund Travers.

Sir Edm. Lord Davenant, I kiſs your hands—why this is as it ſhould be; this is as it us'd to be in days of yore, when man and wife fulfill'd the ſaying and were one fleſh. I proteſt to you, I have been let into the houſes

of three married couple this morning, and found but one and a half at home.

Lord D. Perhaps the hen birds were on the perch, Sir Edmund, 'tis rather early.

Sir Edm. Very good, very good, but that was not the caſe—Lady Turtle, for inſtance, was on the wing; that dove had left the ark;—knowing Sir Philander to be ſo fond a mate, I aſk'd him of my Lady—ſhe was not in the houſe—how did ſhe do? he cou'd not tell—where was ſhe gone? he did not care—I ſtar'd at this—he obſerving my ſurprize, ſaid, he ſuppoſed I had not heard of his misfortune, elſe I would never have mentioned that vile huſſey in his hearing—a plague upon all family affairs! thought I; 'twas not a week ago, this fellow held me by the ear with a detail as tedious as the courtſhip of Jacob and Rebecca—but I have always ſaid, Lord Davenant and my Niece are the only inſtances of conjugal felicity, in upper life at leaſt.

Lady D. If you think us ſo happy, Uncle, why don't you take an agreeable companion to chear the evening of your days?

Sir Edm. To hang myſelf in the evening of my days: how cou'd you name ſo horrible a thing to me as an agreeable companion?

Lady D. I've obſerv'd, that they who rail moſt againſt matrimony, are the firſt to marry.

Sir Edm. And I've remark'd, that they who marry, are the firſt to rail: lack-aday, if

I did

I did not find you and my Lord here together in a family way, as they call it, always civil and courteous to each other, with a ſmile of complacency on your countenances, what ſhould I think?—if I did not ſee theſe things with my own eyes, what ſhould I ſay, when ſo many buſy tattling fools are whiſpering it about that you are the moſt unhappy couple in London?

Lord D. Whiſpering, Sir Edmund! they'll whiſper any thing; but who dares ſay it?

Sir Edm. That was juſt my anſwer; my anſwer to a tittle:—a plague upon you all! ſaid I t'other night to a knot of old fogrums at the Mount, who were caballing over their coffee, not perceiving me ſnug in a corner box—a plague upon you all! ſaid I—

Lord D. Tedious old blockhead!—I'll eſcape in time. [*Going.*

Sir Edm. My Lord, my Lord, hear out my ſtory; it is told in three words.

Lord D. I beg your pardon, but I've indiſpenſable buſineſs, and have outſtaid my engagement. [*Exit* Lord Davenant.

Sir Edm. Why look you there, now—'tis ſurprizing how unwilling people are to hear my ſtories; not a man in our club will ſit them out, except the ſmoakers. 'Twas juſt the ſame, when I was in Parliament, nothing but coughing, hemming, and ſhuffling of feet: no attention, no deſire of information: all their brains a gadding.

And your Lord has a piece of that, let me tell you; but a good man in the main, an excellent man in the main, an incomparable husband.—

Lady D. I make no complaint.

Sir Edm. To be ſure you don't—complaint indeed! no, if you had the leaſt cauſe for that, truſt me for finding it out; nothing of that ſort could eſcape me, you know it could not.

Lady D. I ſhould be ſorry you had any cauſe to regret a match ſo entirely of your own making.

Sir Edm. Right, child, you are right; 'twas a match of my own making; you owe all your happineſs to your uncle; and you now perceive a grey head was a little wiſer than a green one: you was once of another opinion, but that's paſt and over; I don't reproach you, Louiſa; indeed I may charge that error of your life to my own indulgence. I humour'd you to a fault in your education; turn'd my houſe into a ſchool to make you happy; let you have as many maſters as you pleas'd; doctors and apothecaries, you might chooſe amongſt them all; but in the important article of a huſband, there indeed I ſtept in, there I had my choice, as was natural I ſhould; and now you ſee the conſequence; now, Louiſa, I ſay, you ſee the conſequence.

Lady D. I do indeed, Sir.

Sir Edm. Why that's fair; you are perfectly happy, and you own it, that's ſincere: and

what did I do to make you ſo? thwarted your inclinations, that were leading you aſtray: I choſe my Lord Davenant here, a man of a certain age, a widower, d'ye ſee; not only fit to huſband you, Louiſa, but to father you; whereas you know, and, if you are honeſt, you will confeſs, that if I had indulg'd you in your choice—

Lady D. I ſhould have choſen otherwiſe.

Sir Edm. You would have married young Dormer.

Lady D. I confeſs it.

Sir Edm. Oh, the many anxious thoughts I had to prevent it! how did I puzzle my poor brain to make you happy and break off your connexion with that young fellow!

Lady D. Was there a contrivance in that buſineſs?

Sir Edm. Was there a contrivance, child! to be ſure there was; there's a contrivance in every thing I do: and I muſt do Lord Davenant the juſtice to ſay, he took ſome pains in that affair as well as myſelf—witneſs Captain Dormer's letter to you.—

Lady D. What of that, I beſeech you? let me know all my obligations to Lord Davenant.

Sir Edm. And 'tis fit you ſhould; every man's good deeds ſhould be known: he wrote every word of that letter himſelf; not a ſyllable was Captain Dormer's.

Lady

Lady D. Not a ſyllable!

Sir Edm. Not a tittle—and my Lord never told you this?—

Lady D. Never.

Sir Edm. That's extraordinary; but indeed he bound me to ſecrecy; ſo you muſt ſay nothing of the matter: Oh! he was at uncommon pains for your ſake; for he thought you would be a monſtrous fortune; and ſo to be ſure you will at my death—but there I outwitted him too, for I came down with only ten thouſand, and ſaddled him with a humming jointure, and four hundred a year pin-money.—Ah, my dear Louiſa, I conſulted your happineſs in every tittle of your ſettlement.

Lady D. Since you have been ſo conſiderate of me in the bargain you have made with Lord Davenant, let me hope you will now aſſiſt him in a family difficulty. His ſon is treating for the purchaſe of a majority, and wants a ſum of money to complete it; he is an excellent young man, and you would do me a moſt acceptable kindneſs, if you would enable me to ſupply him with five hundred pounds.

Sir Edm. Ah Louiſa, Louiſa! I'm afraid the ſtories I've heard of your huſband's gaming are too true.

Lady D. About as true as what you've heard of our unhappineſs: but I thought you treated all ſuch reports with contempt.

Sir

Sir Edm. And ſo I do—but time flies; 'tis viſiting day with me, and I muſt leave you—good morning.

Lady D. But you have given me no anſwer about the money.

Sir Edm. Anſwer, child! what ſignifies anſwering you, when the thing is impoſſible?

[*Exit.*

Lady Davenant.

So then, it ſeems I have been dup'd by baſe contrivances:—Dormer is clear, and I am ſacrific'd. Lord Davenant's conduct is compleat; begins with treachery and ends in tyranny. Moſt miſerable of women, to whom ſhall I complain?—it is too much; I can't ſupport my agony. [*Throws herſelf on a couch, and weeps.*

Sir Edmund *re-enters.*

Sir Edm. Ay, now ſhe's crying, becauſe I refus'd her the money: what a fond fool it is! I warrant now ſhe'd pledge her diamonds to redeem her huſband—

Lady D. Who's there?

Sir Edm. 'Tis I, 'tis uncle Edmund. Nay, Louiſa, if you cry, 'tis all over with me;—take the money, give me a kiſs—I am a fooliſh fond old fellow, and cannot bear to ſee you unhappy. If 'twere as much again, you ſhould have it; but don't aſk me for any more, I pray you don't. 'Tis all in notes; they would

have been navy bills before night—but I'm a fooliſh fond old fellow, that's the truth of it.

Lady D. I thank you, Sir, I thank you.

Sir Edm. A-propos! here is the very gentleman you was ſpeaking of. Come in, Captain Davenant, come in without ceremony: my Lady has got ſomething for you, but I tell no tales, I betray no ſecrets—ſo, ſo; I leave you together. Good bye to you. I leave you together. [*Exit.*

Captain Davenant.

Capt. D. What is this ſecret that Sir Edmund has broach'd? what commands has your Ladyſhip for me?

Lady D. After what my uncle has ſaid, 'tis in vain to deny that I have a requeſt to make, which I beg you not to refuſe me.

Capt. D. If the requeſt ſhall be, as I ſuſpect it is, to receive freſh favours from you, 'tis the only difficulty you can put me to in obeying you.

Lady D. If you knew what pleaſure I receive by tendering to you this trifle towards the purchaſe of your rank, you would take it for my ſake without further ſcruple: if you have any regard for me, accept it at my hands.

Capt. D. What ſhall I ſay to you, moſt generous of women?

Lady D. Nothing; neither is it convenient we ſhould converſe together: I am obliged

to

to requeſt of you not to mention what has paſs'd.

Capt. D. O Lady Davenant! Lady Davenant! my heart bleeds for you—

Lady D. Huſh! not a word of that—now, Sir—

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Harry Harlow to wait upon your Ladyſhip.

Lady D. Did not I tell you to deny me? I am not at home to Sir Harry Harlow. [*Exit.*

Serv. What wou'd your honour pleaſe to have me do? he is coming up ſtairs.

Capt. D. Raſcal, begone! [*Exit* Servant.

Sir Harry Harlow.

Sir H. H. How now, Charles! rating the footman? it is indeed an untowardly whelp; her Ladyſhip is not very ſelect in the choice of her lacqueys; he wou'd have perſwaded me I was not to be let in—But won't your fair mother-in-law make her appearance?

Capt. D. No.

Sir H. H. No, man! is that all the anſwer you can afford me! the yard-dog wou'd ſay as much.

Capt. D. Take your anſwer from him then, when you make your next enquiries.

Lord Davenant.

Lord D. How now, Gentlemen both, at ſharps with each other?

Sir H. H. Captain Davenant ſeems to guard your Lordſhip's doors, as if it was a crime to enter them; if ſo, I muſt confeſs it is a crime I am not diſpoſed to repent of, at leaſt till you tell me I ought to do ſo.

[Capt. Davenant *walks aſide.*

Lord D. Pooh! 'tis his manner; 'tis the faſhion of the times: the young men now a-days, and the young women too, talk no other language to their deareſt friends.—Harkye, Charles, have the kindneſs to ſtep into the library; I want a few words in private with you.

[*Exit* Capt. Davenant.

This young man has ruffled you; and, to ſay truth, his manners are much alter'd: whether he miſtakes in thinking a fierce military air becomes him, or that ſome ſecret matter really diſconcerts him, I can't pretend to ſay, for he communicates with me but little: I beg you will think no more of what is paſt for my ſake.

Sir H. H. Aſſure yourſelf, my Lord, 'tis as if it had never been.

Lord D. Here, Harry, I have a play-debt to ſettle with you; take theſe notes.

Sir H. H. As you will for that; chuſe your own time.

Lord D. Nay, but take them;—'twas a curſed craſh I got laſt night. [*Gives him the notes.*

Sir

Sir H. H. Deuce take me, my Lord, if it does not go to my heart to win your money: I have a thouſand times reſolv'd never to play with you again.

Lord D. Why ſo, in the name of wonder?

Sir H. H. Becauſe I cannot bear to wear in my pocket what might ſo much better be employ'd elſewhere.

Lord D. What is the man moralizing about?

Sir H. H. Well, I proteſt and vow, was I the huſband of my Lady Davenant—

Lord D. You would be as tir'd of her as I am.

Sir H. H. For ſhame, for ſhame! what woman can be more engaging?

Lord D. Every woman that is not my wife.

Sir H. H. That ever matrimony ſhou'd bring a man to this!—as Heaven ſhall be my judge, I'd give one half of my eſtate to ſhare the other with the woman you are ſo indifferent about.

Lord D. And I wou'd give this arm from off this body to be quit of her; ſo there's the difference between you and me: but let us talk no more of the ſubject—is your chariot in waiting?

Sir H. H. It is.

Lord D. Are you going to any diſtance?

Sir H. H. Only to a viſit in the next ſtreet, and then home.

Lord D. If that's all, I ſhou'd be glad you wou'd take my chair, and lend me your car-

riage; I have a little buſineſs at t'other end of the town.

Sir H. H. Take it where you pleaſe; 'tis at your ſervice: I perceive I ſhall not have the honour of making my bow to Lady Davenant this morning.

Lord D. To ſay the truth, I ſuſpect you will not: it does not appear to me, Harry, that you are in train to make your way to her Ladyſhip's good graces;—and it requires a very moderate ſhare of reſolution to reſiſt temptation, when there is no inclination for the tempter.

End of the Firſt ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

An Apartment in Lord Davenant's *Houſe.*

Lady Davenant, *followed by* Captain Davenant.

Capt. D. I Muſt ſpeak to you; you muſt give me a few minutes hearing.

Lady D. Promiſe then, you will not name your father.

Capt. D. 'Tis upon another buſineſs quite; and becauſe you are the friend I beſt love on earth, you ſhall be the firſt to whom I communicate my joy.

Lady D. You have obtained your commiſſion?

Capt. D. I have indeed, but not the commiſſion, my dear Lady, you are thinking of; not a promotion to rank, but to happineſs——I am married.

Lady D. Heaven and earth!—to whom?

Capt. D. An angel: one, who in mind and perſon is your ſiſter; and, if evil fate had not forbade, might have been ſuch in fact.

Lady D. What do you mean? explain yourſelf.

Capt. D. The ſiſter of your Dormer.

Lady D. My Dormer!—What is it you tell me?—does your father know of this?

Capt. D. It is not fit he ſhould: how could he be reconcil'd to my choice, when he neglects his own?

Lady

Lady D. Remember your promiſe, and no more of this.—Where did you meet Miſs Dormer? I thought ſhe was reſident in Flanders.

Capt. D. 'Twas there I met her, on my late journey to Spa:—how I became acquainted with her; why I conceal'd from you my paſſion; with each circumſtance of her affecting ſtory, will demand relation more at large—but ſhe is not, as you call her, Miſs Dormer.

Lady D. That I can readily conceive, ſince you have married her.

Capt. D. But ſhe was not Miſs Dormer when I did marry her: ſhe was the widow of an Engliſh gentleman, of the name of Brooke, who liv'd with her about three months; went to Paris, and there died:—there is ſomething myſterious in the conduct of this man; but that, with other matters, I muſt now defer. We are juſt return'd from a church in the city; but as friendſhip has its claim upon my heart as well as love, I ſnatch an hour from my enchanting bride to ſeek her counterpart; and, as I fear you have few bleſſings you can call your own, I beg you to accept a ſhare in mine.—Farewell!

Lady D. May happineſs attend you both!

[*Exit* Capt. Davenant.

Married to Dormer's ſiſter! How that name ſtrikes on my heart!—And I the confidante of a clandeſtine marriage:—a dangerous ſecret for my peace; the tranſport of the moment never ſuffered him to think of that—well, let the

danger

danger come!—there was a time I ſhou'd have been more ſcrupulous; but the baſe conduct of Lord Davenant makes him loathſome in my eyes; and was my injur'd hero now to come—Oh, Heaven, I will not think of it—Watch over him, ye guardians of the good and brave!—waft him, ye winds, to glory!—may the ſhip that bears him, and the ſtar by which he ſails, be ever proſperous!—and, as he walks the deck by night, amidſt the waſte of waters, ſhould a thought of my unkindneſs ſmite his manly heart with ſadneſs, may ſome pitying ſpirit turn aſide the thought, and ſtrike out my unhappy name from his remembrance!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Pleaſe your Ladyſhip, there is a ſea-officer below, enquires for my Lord; I told him he was from home, but he ſays he will wait his return.

Lady D. Where is my Lord?

Serv. Gone out in Sir Harry Harlow's chariot: I hope his Lordſhip will not be angry at my letting the gentleman in.

Lady D. I hope not; you ſhould make him give his name, however.

Serv. That I did at firſt, Madam; 'tis our general order.

Lady D. And what is his name?

Serv. He has wrote it down on a card——Bleſs me,

me, my Lady! ſomething's the matter; ſhall I run for your Ladyſhip's woman?

Lady D. No, no, be quiet—it will go off—what have I done with the card?

Serv. Here it is: pray, my Lady, forgive my boldneſs, and let me call your ſervant.

Lady D. There's no occaſion;—I charge you not to mention to a ſoul that I was ill.—Shew the gentleman into the eating-parlour — and remember to tell nobody of this trifling diſorder.

Serv. Not for the world———The bleſſing on her! what a ſweet Lady it is! [*Exit.*

Lady Davenant.

Lady D. Dormer return'd, and in the houſe!—All-ruling Providence, receive a helpleſs creature into thy protection! ſuccour my fainting ſpirits in this dangerous moment, and ſupport my reſolution, ſtruggling in a tide of paſſions, from whoſe overwhelming force no hand but thine can ſave me!—I obey—it is thy voice that warns me to avoid him; and tho' to juſtify myſelf to Dormer were the deareſt object of my life, I will not do it:—no, let me ſuffer as I may, I will not meet him; I will never ſee him more.

Enter Waiting Woman.

W. Wom. O Madam! O my Lady! ſuch a thing is come to paſs! Captain Dormer's in the houſe; I have ſeen him with my own eyes.

Lady

Lady D. Well, if he is, what's that to me? was it well done of you, to expoſe me by your idle curioſity?

W. Wom. Indeed and indeed, my Lady, I was innocently going into the eating-parlour for your Ladyſhip's netting-box, not thinking any body was there, when I ſaw a ſea-officer in his uniform, looking earneſtly at your Ladyſhip's portrait over the chimney; his back was towards me, ſo I did not know who it was; and on I went, thinking no offence, when ſuddenly he turn'd upon me; and then to be ſure I gave a loud ſhriek, diſcovering him to be Captain Dormer.

Lady D. Does he know I am in this houſe?

W. Wom. Know, Madam! to be ſure he knows your Ladyſhip is married to my Lord; for he aſk'd me if the portrait was not drawn for you, which you know I cou'd not deny;—and then he aſk'd me how it came in this houſe, and ſo I told him you was married to my Lord, which is nothing but the truth—and then, mercy on me, how he ſtarted! ſo I thought I wou'd ſay no more; but as I was going, Madam, he took me by the hand and held me, and then he aſk'd me half a hundred queſtions, all in a breath, ſo that I knew not what to anſwer; but telling him that your Ladyſhip wanted me up ſtairs, away I run—and if I have done any thing amiſs, I heartily aſk your Ladyſhip's pardon.

Lady D. Amiſs! I know not what you've done. Did he aſk to ſee me?

W. Wom. Oh! moſt earneſtly; but I was afraid to tell your Ladyſhip of that; indeed he beg'd very hard to ſee you.

Lady D. Impoſſible! It muſt not be.—How does he look?

W. Wom. Lovelily; you wou'd be charm'd to ſee him.

Lady D. Pooh!—I mean is he in health?

W. Wom. In perfect health.

Lady D. Thank Heaven for that!

W. Wom. Madam?—

Lady D. Reſtrain your curioſity, if you pleaſe, and ſay nothing of what has paſs'd. Go down to Captain Dormer, and tell him—tell him I am rejoic'd—No, that won't do—Cruel neceſſity! —Tell him I muſt never ſee him more.

W. Wom. Lack-aday, my Lady, I ſhall never have the heart to tell him that—Oh, the miſchief! here's my Lord. [*Exit haſtily.*

Lord Davenant.

Lord D. So your Captain Dormer is come home, and you have admitted him into my houſe.

Lady D. No, my Lord, I have not admitted him.

Lord D. But your ambaſſadreſs there has been in treaty:—meſſages have paſſed; I know they have.

Lady D. My conduct, my Lord, is open; I have no ſecrets, and if it is any ſatisfaction to you to know it, I can aſſure you it is my fixt reſolution never to ſee Captain Dormer any more.

Lord D. A woman's reſolution; and you'll keep it accordingly.

Lady D. I hope I ſhall keep it for your Lordſhip's ſake as well as my own.

Lord D. For my ſake!

Lady D. Yes, I have the ſtrongeſt reaſons on your account. Captain Dormer is an injur'd man; interviews might draw on explanations, and theſe might lead to conſequences of an unpleaſant nature.

Lord D. You deal in riddles, Madam; your tone is rais'd too, now your champion's in the houſe.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Captain Dormer's compliments, and begs to know if your Lordſhip will be pleas'd to ſee him.

Lord D. Tell him I'll wait upon him preſently—[*Exit* Servant.] What can ſhe mean by explanations?—her confidence alarms me—if Paget has betray'd me—if ſhe has heard of my affair with Dormer's ſiſter, all is loſt.—I'll prove her further. [*Aſide*] You ſay that Dormer is an injur'd man; who tells you ſo? what is his injury, and who has done it?

Lady D. If letters have been fabricated which he never wrote; and if it may be call'd an injury to impreſs with falſe opinions hearts that were once devoted to each other, then am I warranted in what I ſay:—My uncle is my author.

Lord D. So your wife uncle has told you this; this is the mighty myſtery—for my ſhare of the artifice, it is amongſt the crimes I have repented of moſt cordially: You cannot execrate the luckleſs hour that made us one more bitterly than I do.

Lady D. Since it is ſo, my Lord, I ſhall not aggravate that bitterneſs by expoſing you to the reproaches of Captain Dormer.

Lord D. If you've no other reaſon for avoiding him but this, you are free to juſtify yourſelf at my expence;—if you have nothing elſe to charge me with to Captain Dormer, this I can face, and inſtantly—Who waits?—nay, I'll prevent you, own to what I've done, and ſtand by conſequences, be they what they may—Stay, you yourſelf ſhall hear me.

Lady D. I beg to be excus'd: I muſt inſiſt upon permiſſion to withdraw. [*Exit.*

Enter Servant.

Lord D. Tell Captain Dormer I am ready to receive him—for if the time muſt come when he that does the wrong, and he that ſuffers it, ſhall face to face bring their accounts to iſſue,

better

better that the audit paſs in this life than another—Why then this ſudden tremor?—conſcience, conſcience, is this fair dealing? ſlow to admoniſh, when you might have ſav'd me; loud in reproach, when admonition is too late. What if I told this young man all the wrong I've done him?—what if I avow'd the horrid injury that's yet unknown; that worm that gnaws my heart; that canker, which the inciſion of his ſword can only cure?—I know the awful conſummation is at hand: I feel the coming on of things; but when, and in what manner they ſhall paſs, I cannot tell. The hand that rules my fate muſt faſhion it.

Servant *introduces* Captain Dormer.

Serv. Captain Dormer. [*Exit.*

Lord D. You are welcome to England, Sir: I am ſorry I was not ready to receive you, and that you have been put to the trouble of waiting for me.

Dorm. The apology is due for my importunity, but I conſider this as a viſit of duty; and as I owe my command to your Lordſhip's recommendation, I was determin'd that the firſt door I enter'd in London ſhould be your's.

Lord D. You are juſt arriv'd?

Dorm. Within this hour.

Lord D. You do me honour, and I hear with much content you've done yourſelf great honour, and the ſervice.

Dorm.

Dorm. Such men and officers as I have ſerv'd with muſt enſure ſucceſs; I muſt have been the ſole defaulter in my ſhip, if we had flinch'd our duty.

Lord D. If there is any thing I can further obey you in, you will be pleas'd to command me.

Dorm. I humbly thank you; and can only ſay, tho' I have been long at ſea, I don't wiſh to be idle on ſhore. There is a buſineſs, however, that I have at heart to ſettle before I go out again; and as your Lordſhip's favour has enabled me to make a fortune, the ſame friendſhip perhaps will aſſiſt me in the diſpoſal of it.

Lord D. Explain yourſelf, if you pleaſe; you know I have been always at your ſervice.

Dorm. I have a ſiſter—

Lord D. Sir!—[*Starting.*]

Dorm. My Lord! I hope you have heard nothing to the contrary.

Lord D. No, on my honour—pleaſe to proceed.

Dorm. I hope ſhe is yet living; 'tis a long time ſince I heard from her: ſhe is the only relation I have left; an orphan girl, my Lord; and if ſhe is ſtill at Antwerp, where I left her, I can ſcarce hope to ſee her before I am order'd out again. To her I have bequeath'd the earnings of my ſervice, and in the mean time made ſuitable proviſion for her ſupport:—if you, who are the founder of my fortune, will kindly

undertake

undertake this friendly truſt and ſuffer me to depoſite in your care an orphan charge, you will put me under everlaſting obligation.

Lord D. By Heaven, this is too much! [*Aſide.*] Sir!—Mr. Dormer!—I am ſenſible of the honour you do me—but you muſt think I am a man not uſed to buſineſs of this ſort—the commiſſion is a very delicate commiſſion:—the charge of a young lady—

Dorm. Is a very ſacred charge—I feel it ſuch; and therefore ardently would wiſh to reſt it with a man of honour. I am ſenſible of my preſumption; I know I am impoſing trouble, where I ought only to be paying gratitude;—but, my Lord Davenant, I have no friends except in my own profeſſion; they cannot ſerve me on this occaſion. You are my only hope; and, as you have once taken me by the hand, I pray you do not let it go: I am bold to hope I ſhall not bring diſcredit on your protection, and I ſhall be through life devoted to you for the favour.

Lord D. I am diſtreſſed; and if I do not anſwer you to your wiſh, it is becauſe I'm ſenſible I do not merit the good opinion you repoſe in me:—you will allow me ſome time to reflect on what you deſire.

Dorm. By all means: I would not take your friendſhip by ſurprize. One thing I ſhould naturally have ſtated to you before; but ſince I entered your Lordſhip's houſe, I have been informed

formed of a circumſtance, that makes the mention of it a matter of ſome embarraſſment.

Lord D. What may that circumſtance be?

Dorm. I underſtand you have the happineſs to call a Lady your's, whom I had once the audacity to aſpire to;—Miſs Travers I am told is Lady Davenant.

Lord D. How is ſhe intereſted in this buſineſs?

Dorm. Your Lordſhip having been privy to my paſſion for your moſt amiable Lady, I may be allowed to ſay to you, that it was my firſt paſſion and will be my laſt. Her uncle's oppoſition, and her better deſtiny, traverſed my too ambitious hopes, and reſerved her to a worthier choice. Though there was ſomething harder than I could have expected in her manner of diſmiſſing me, ſtill, upon reflection, I cannot condemn the lady, who had prudence to reject an inſolent pretender with the ſcorn he merited: nay, I am vain enough to flatter myſelf, her uncle dictated expreſſions that did not originate with her:—be that as it may, I have bequeathed my fortune to her upon failure of my ſiſter and her heirs.

Lord D. Aſtoniſhing! when did you take this reſolution?

Dorm. When I was far enough from thinking I ſhould ever ſee her more; after the action, when I was deſpaired of from my wounds: and though I do not wiſh your Lordſhip to report

this

this to Lady Davenant, I hope it will be a motive with you for undertaking the truſt, when ſo dear a part of you has an eventual intereſt in it.

Lord D. So dear a part of me! 'Tis plain that ſhe is ſuch to you; and that her refuſal has not yet extinguiſhed your affection.

Dorm. No, my Lord, her honour and her happineſs are ſtill as dear to me as my own; no other object can ever interpoſe to draw off my attachment: having once had the honour of being regarded by her, I can never deſcend to think of any other woman; and I hope I have already convinced your Lordſhip, that, ſo far from bearing enmity to the happy man who poſſeſſes her, I rejoice to find that the object of her love and the friend of my life is one and the ſame perſon. I therefore once again entreat you to take my ſiſter alſo into your protection; and you will then have in charge every thing I hold valuable upon earth.

Lord D. This is really ſo extraordinary, that I muſt wonder on what grounds you reſt a confidence in me ſo full and ſo implicit.

Dorm. To ſay the truth, I follow Lady Davenant's choice; perſuaded I may truſt my intereſts where ſhe repoſes her's.

Lord D. But ſuppoſe, for a moment, that compulſion, and not choice, determined Lady Davenant to ally herſelf to me.

Dorm. Impoſſible! I'll not ſuppoſe it for a moment.

Lord D. Nay, let me put a ſtronger caſe—Suppoſe this idol of your ſoul ſhould raiſe no ecſtacies in mine—What if this angel of perfection ſhould to me appear the moſt indifferent of women?—In plainer words, what would you ſay, if Lady Davenant was the object of my fix'd averſion?

Dorm. What would I ſay!—but I forbear, and underſtand ſuch ſuppoſitions as a civil intimation that 'tis time I took my leave.

Lord D. Oh, by no means: I've much to ſay to you.

Dorm. Some other time: I've troubled you too long already. [*Exit haſtily.*

Lord Davenant.

Lord D. Curſed be the hour in which I wrong'd this man! What a clear ſpirit! what a lofty ſoul! There is a ſtatelineſs and grace in virtue, which guilty pride can never imitate.—'Sdeath! how I loath myſelf!—Damnation! what a wretch I am! If I had worlds, I'd give them to be free. —Vain lamentation! vain remorſe!—let no man think to take one ſtep in infamy, and then retract:—Impoſſible! the precipice has no degrees;—down, down he falls at once, plunges into the fathomleſs abyſs, and ſinks for ever! [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to the Apartment of* Marianne.

Marianne *enters haſtily.*

Mar. Where ſhall I hide myſelf? He's in the houſe:—What ſhall I ſay?—How ſhall I bear to ſee him?—Wretched, wretched woman!

[*Weeps.*

Enter Charles *to her.*

Capt. D. Joy to my Marianne! my wife! my—Heaven defend me! what's the matter? Why are you in tears?—My life! my ſoul! what ails thee?—Anſwer me, or I ſhall ſink with apprehenſion.

Mar. Alas, my deareſt friend, no more my huſband—

Capt. D. What do you mean? I am in agonies.

Mar. My huſband is alive; I have ſeen him.

Capt. D. What then am I?

Mar. Ruin'd, diſgrac'd, betray'd;—and I the cauſe.

Capt. D. Oh, inſupportable and killing ſtroke! can there be miſery more deep than this? By Heaven, I'll not reſign you. Villain, deceiver as he is, he cannot claim what he has faithleſsly abandon'd; and, if he does, my ſword ſhall ſtrike him dead. Blaſt him, eternal juſtice! —burſt underneath his feet, and ſwallow him, thou violated earth!

Mar. By this our laſt embrace, I do beſeech you moderate your rage; it frightens me; your looks are wild;—have patience, and collect yourſelf to bear this cruel ſtroke.

Capt. D. If what extinguiſhes my happineſs, deprives me of my reaſon, can I help it? If you have ſeen him, known him, and convers'd with him, direct me where he is, and I'll aſſert my right; for if he was my father, by the Power that made me—

Mar. Pray, no more: hear me, if poſſible, with ſome compoſure.

Capt. D. Where did this meeting paſs? you have not left the houſe.

Mar. I ſaw him from my window in his chariot; there was a noiſe and uproar in the ſtreet; ſome fray between his ſervants and the driver of a hackney carriage:—he had let down the glaſs, and ſtopt his chariot.

Capt. D. But are you ſure 'twas he?

Mar. Too ſure: no ſooner did my eye glance on his perſon, than, terror-ſtruck, and ſcarce myſelf, I ran down to the door, went out, and call'd to him to ſtop, for now the carriages were diſengag'd—

Capt. D. What did he then?

Mar. He ſtopt, lookt out, diſcover'd me, and calling eagerly to his coachman, drove furiouſly away.

Capt. D. Infamous wretch! abuſer of your unprotected innocence! hypocrite, that counter-

feiting

feiting piety, ſtole into the ſanctuary of virtue, and robb'd the altar of its holieſt relick!—I never lik'd his ſtory; always thought his ſanctified approaches, under cloak of mock benevolence and pity, were ſuſpicious: then his pretended death, and the inſcrutable darkneſs ſucceeding it, were proofs demonſtrative of fraud. My life upon't, he is ſome titled profligate. Have you no marks to trace him by? the equipage, arms, liveries? did you not note them?—thro' the earth I will purſue him to detection.

Mar. I was incapable of ſuch remarks: I have ſent my ſervant amongſt the neighbours; his equipage was gay and ſplendid, and 'tis poſſible it may be known—but what enſues, when it is known?—diſtraction, death.—Oh, leave me, Charles, renounce me, baniſh my misfortunes from your thoughts, and may ſome happier woman—

Capt. D. Madneſs is in the thought: never will I forſake thee; never, by all that's ſacred, whilſt I live, will I acknowledge any other wife: in thy embrace is center'd all my happineſs; —here, here, my lovely Marianne, I will both live and die.

Mar. Alas, my deareſt Charles, altho' my ſoul doats on you, can I for your ſake ſuffer it? —ought I for my own?

Capt. D. Are you not then my wife? who ſhall oppoſe it? Have you any other huſband?

Let

Let the world's laws interpret as they may, by right of Heaven's decree you are mine: let him that forg'd the lye, fall by the lye. What if the records of his death were falſe?—you thought them true; and in perſuaſion of their truth, you married: therefore he's dead to you, tho' he ſurvives to villainy;—the huſband is extinct, tho' the impoſtor lives.

Mar. For me, who am the child of ſorrow, friendleſs and obſcure, the world's opinions are no rule of right; Heaven and my conſcience give the law to me—but oh! to ſink your fame and fortune, bury all your ſplendid hopes, your active talents—it is not to be thought of: no, your friends, your family, your country claims you: misfortune is my birth-right; I am encompaſs'd with a ſphere of wretchedneſs, and every one is blighted that approaches me: an orphan in the cradle; one brave youth, one dear beloved brother, was the cordial of my life—of him perhaps I am bereft.

Capt. D. No, Providence reſtores him to you: this ſad accident ſo fill'd my thoughts, or I had ſooner told you the good tidings of your brother. —Dormer's arriv'd.

Mar. Is he arriv'd?

Capt. D. He is arriv'd, and crown'd with glory, crown'd with fortune: you are the ſiſter of a hero, who will ſtand recorded in his country's brighteſt annals: intereſt might ſolicit your alliance;

alliance; pride might boaſt of it; even miſers now might court the ſiſter of the wealthy Dormer.

Mar. Then I will not deſpair: amidſt the clouds and darkneſs of my fate, Heaven yet ſhall viſit me with one bright gleam of hope.

Capt. D. Yes, we ſhall ſtill be happy; I feel my ſpirits lighten; my love to you is not a brutal heat; 'tis founded on the graces of your mind; brighten'd, but not blinded, by the charms of your perſon. I have no part to act; to Dormer, to my father, to the world I will avow my claim; I'll ſeek your brother, join him in dragging forth to light this dark Myſterious Huſband. To this I pledge my word; till this be done, however painful the ſuſpenſe, however dear the ſacrifice, I am your friend, not huſband.—Come, come then, thou ſoft affliction, quiet thy diſtracted thoughts—all things will yet be well.

End of the Second ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

Enter Lord Davenant *and* Paget.

Lord D. I Tell you, 'tis impoſſible. I am beſet, embay'd; broad, full-fac'd infamy now ſtares upon me. If all the dæmons that are leagu'd in miſchief ſate in council for my reſcue, Hell and its advocates have no reſource to ward off my detection.

Paget. I would have had you thought of this before.

Lord D. Prythee forbear reproach! my own heart is ſufficient for that office.—Where is my Lady?

Paget. In her chamber.

Lord D. Alone?

Paget. I think ſo.

Lord D. Would ſhe were in her grave!—I'll think of that—the ſight of Marianne, the glimpſe I ſnatcht this morning of her beauties, fatal altho' it be, has ſtir'd the flame afreſh: it burns within me; horror cannot quench it;—Dormer's return, his preſence, his reproaches can't extinguiſh it; not even his ſword, tho' it transfixt my heart.—But I forget to aſk you what intelligence you've gather'd. Am I diſcover'd? is my name out in the affair?

Paget. I do not find it is; and if you wiſh it ſhould not, you muſt take inſtant meaſures

with Sir Harry Harlow and his ſervants; his equipage is known by many, and will lead diſcovery to you.

Lord D. To him you mean—and that's to me. Can I ſet him in front, and ſkulk behind his friendſhip like a coward? will he permit it think you? No.—Can I?—there's no evaſion left—now, what's your buſineſs?

Enter Servant.

Serv. My Lord, Sir Edmund Travers is below.

Lord D. Admit him—doating blockhead! blind fool! that cannot ſee the ſun at noon, for that is not more glaring in it's full meridian, than the apparent miſery that he is author of—begone! [*Exit* Paget.

Sir Edmund Travers.

Sir. Edm. My Lord, I've news for you.

Lord D. Dormer's arriv'd.

Sir Edm. How your wit jumps!

Lord D. I've news for you. A ſecret; but you'll keep it—

Sir Edm. Oh! upon honour!

Lord D. Nay, as you will, for this it is—we are two ſorry knaves.

Sir Edm. Who! you and I?

Lord D. Exactly ſo: a pair as perfect as iniquity e'er matcht. We trick'd this marriage

neatly; did we not?—fine cheats, to paſs theſe letters off upon your niece and Dormer—neat forgeries they were; and precious gulls the lovers, to be trapp'd ſo readily. But you are ſecret now; true to the gang; you did not blab this to Lady Davenant?

Sir Edm. What do you mean? I blab it! I to Lady Davenant!

Lord D. You. If you dare, deny it.

Sir Edm. Deny it! no, I cannot abſolutely deny it; but who could think ſhe would be fool enough to broach it?

Lord D. The firſt that broach'd it was the fool. You've ſet the miſchief running; now drain the bitter cup of your affliction to its loweſt and it's fouleſt dregs. Dormer ſhall know the plot, which hand in hand we've practis'd to deceive him. The paſſion which was dead in him ſhall riſe again: I'll urge them on, enflame them to renew'd deſires; and, when their ſtimulated hearts ruſh to forbidden tranſports, then, in that guilty moment, you and I, like brother villains, will ſteal in with ſilent ſteps, and feaſt upon the ruin we have made.

Sir Edm. Oh horrible! you'll not do this.

Lord D. Why not? ſuch true bred ſons of wickedneſs as we are, have a luxury in miſchief. What do you care? you hate your niece; I execrate my wife.

Sir Edm. Why you are mad ſure; ſtark mad and raving. I hate my niece! you execrate

your

your wife! I thought you were the fondeſt pair on earth; and for my niece—

Lord D. You ſtole her from an honeſt man, and ſold her to a Lord. Now get you home: weigh theſe things well in your diſcerning mind; put truth in one ſcale, titles in the other; and, when you've ſtruck the balance, come and compare accounts with me, and we'll divide the gains. [*Exit.*

Sir Edmund Travers.

Sir Edm. 'Tis as I ſaid: the man's beſide himſelf; out of all line and compaſs of right reaſon: I ſaw it in his eyes: the moon's in the mad quarter. 'Tis jealouſy of Dormer: ſheer downright jealouſy, and nothing elſe: foregad, and that will do't as ſoon as any thing. He ſaid he'd tell the plot to Dormer, make them both deſperately in love afreſh, and put them together; a proof of jealouſy:—he ſaid he execrated his wife; a proof he loves her: and what are love and jealouſy but madneſs? how his poor brains are tumbled topſy-turvy! I pity him at my heart. I muſt look ſharp, and watch this Dormer cloſely; if I diſcover them at their old tricks, I ſhall make bold to read this niece of mine a good round lecture: when ſo many heads are gone aſtray, 'tis lucky for the world that ſome folks have their wits about them. [*Exit.*

Lord Davenant *returns.*

Lord D. I will not live in torment; nor ſhall the preaching of pedantic churchmen fetter this free ſpirit in this body, when it is weary of its priſon. What know they of an hereafter more than we, who never prov'd it? all is ſpeculation in futurity; and he that travels on in miſery, in the hope or fear of what ſhall meet him at his journey's end, gives up his reaſon for a dream, and follows a blind guide he knows not whither, and he knows not why.

Enter Lady Davenant.

Lady D. I interrupt your meditations.

Lord D. You ſhall partake of them—Come, I ſhall probe your ſpirit; I ſhall bring you to confeſſion ere we part: is it not a miſerable life we have paſs'd together? is it not a curſed one?

Lady D. It might have been more happy.

Lord D. How? what can make harmony of diſcord? how can two hearts be brought together, that ſo widely point aſunder? will the weak bands of marriage draw them nearer? No, we were made by Heaven ſo adverſe and unlike in our original conſtruction, that we may ſafely ſet the rubrick at defiance, and without more proceſs, part.

Lady D. Part!

Lord D. For ever.

Lady D. On what plea?

Lord D. The beſt and faireſt — mutual averſion.

Lady D. Of what can you accuſe me?

Lord D. Of hypocriſy, if you perſiſt to live with me: who harbours with the thing he hates? what creature mates with its oppoſite? Nature proteſts againſt it. You hate me: come, I know you do, and you have cauſe.

Lady D. Remove that cauſe: break off from thoſe bad courſes that degrade a mind not naturally degenerate: 'twill be a worthier ſeparation, a more laudable divorce than from an unoffending wife.

Lord D. What if I did? you cannot love me.

Lady D. Try; there is virtue in the experiment at leaſt.

Lord D. You love young Dormer; in your ſoul you love him; what your fooliſh uncle has betray'd, endears him to you more than ever: what I now ſhall tell you, will augment that augmentation, and enflame affection into phrenzy.

Lady D. Stop then in time. By every ſacred name I charge you to forbear: let me be miſerable, but do not make me guilty.

Lord D. I mean to ſave you both from miſery and guilt;—I have convers'd with Dormer; he adores you: defeated in his hopes, diſmiſs'd, and by our artifices us'd moſt hardly, ſtill he perſiſts to love you. Nay, the deluded generous youth, becauſe I am your huſband, even on me devolves his friendſhip and affection:

tenders

tenders to me the execution of his will—ſolicits me (oh wond'rous teſt of confidence!) to take the guardianſhip of Marianne.

Lady D. Aſtoniſhing!

Lord D. Yes, 'twere aſtoniſhing, if you knew all. [*Aſide.*] Nay, there is more—he has bequeath'd you his whole fortune at his ſiſter's death. Now, what think you of this man? now, Lady Davenant, how do you feel your heart affected by theſe proofs of unabating love?

Lady D. Deeply, moſt deeply—yet not otherwiſe I hope than as becomes your wife.

Lord D. Hence with the name! hence with that idle ceremony, to which our hearts were never pledg'd; which nature cancels, reaſon diſavows, and we both execrate religiouſly!—go where your heart invites you: go to Dormer; with him you will be bleſt: with me each day, each hour will aggravate your wretchedneſs.

Lady D. Can you be ſerious?

Lord D. As death. The bitter moments you have paſs'd are ſweet to thoſe that muſt inevitably follow.

Lady D. My Lord, my Lord, you put too much upon me, when you urge me to a deed of ſuch diſgrace. Your cruelty will ſhortly bring me to my grave, then you'll be free; but if the proceſs be too ſlow for your impatience, draw forth your ſword; I'll ſooner meet its point, than be the guilty thing that you would make me.

Lord

Lord D. Curſt be theſe peeviſh ſcruples! By the Power that made me, if you will not accord to my propoſal, I will render life your torment! —and for that bubble reputation, which you prize ſo much above its worth, I'll blaſt it thro' the world: I'll faſten ſhame upon you; it ſhall haunt you like your ſhadow: ridicule ſhall dog you at the heels: abuſe and ſlander bark at you like hounds, and tear that virtue, which is but a cloak, to nakedneſs and rags: and when I've render'd you thus loathſome to behold, I'll take you at your word — bury my ſword in your relentleſs breaſt, and after plunge it in my own.

Lady D. Alas, my Lord, I pity you, and feel more terror for your deſperation than my own danger. There muſt be ſomething horrid in your mind, more than you have yet diſclos'd.

Lord D. Perhaps there is, and 'tis in pity that I call upon you now thus earneſtly, thus, for the laſt time, to ſave yourſelf. 'Tis not by nature I am cruel; one diſhonourable deed, the impulſe of a guilty paſſion, has diſtorted all my actions. I would confide it to you, for I hold you worthy every ſacred truſt, but——

[Paget *enters.*

Hah! he is come! bid Captain Dormer enter.

Lady D. Dormer again! then let me go.

Lord D. No, you muſt ſtay: by all that's ſacred, you ſhall not depart.

Lady D. Support me, Heaven! and witneſs for me, that I did not ſeek this interview.—'Tis he.

Enter Dormer; *ſeeing* Lady Davenant, *he ſtarts.*

Lord D. Stand not amaz'd, but enter: ſhe whom you ſeek is here: the faded form, that once you thought ſo fair, is preſent.—Approach!

Dorm. Yes, if my limbs will bear me—Oh! to each ſenſe moſt dear!—Thou beſt of women!

[*Advances to her.*

Lord D. Add too, unhappieſt!

Lady D. Save me; ſupport me, or I faint.

[Dormer *ſupports her in his arms.*

Dorm. Help, help, my Lord! ſhe faints.

Lord D. Alas! my touch will murder; be it your taſk; your right is preferable; for you ſhe lov'd, me ſhe only married.

Dorm. Can you look on unmov'd?

Lord D. How ſhould you know what moves and paſſes here? I am the author of this interview:—It is the tribute of atonement. I am the man who counterfeited that letter that diſmiſs'd you from your hopes: the ſhip my intereſt procured for you, my jealouſy provided.—Now, if you wiſh deſtruction to your ſiſter, give her in charge to me.

Dorm. To infamy as ſoon. Return, and meet your death. [Lord Davenant *is going.*

Lord

Lord D. Before you take my life, recover her's: when you've done that, I ſhall be found: mean time I leave with you my pledge.

[*Exit.*

Lady D. [*recovering*] What's that? where am I? ah! [*looking on Dormer, ſhrieks.*] O Dormer, Dormer!

Dorm. Speak to me: unload your burthen'd heart: be candid to a friend, whoſe very ſoul is your's.

Lady D. I had determin'd never to have ſeen you more.

Dorm. O exemplary woman! even that I could have borne, had you been happy; but that monſter ſhall not live.

Lady D. Hold, hold! you muſt not draw your ſword upon Lord Davenant.

Dorm. Not draw my ſword! my wrongs and your redreſs will ſanctify revenge: 'twere criminal to let him live.

Lady D. What! ſhall I be a party in the aſſaſſination of my huſband?—I tell you, Dormer, if you ever draw your ſword upon him, from that moment I renounce you; never will I ſee you, ſpeak of you, or in meditation call you to remembrance, but with horror.

Dorm. Not when he dares me to it?

Lady D. Never in any caſe, by any call or provocation, if you have love or pity for me left.

Dorm. If I have love! oh, if the awful preſence of your virtue did not check my tongue, I ſhould have told you at your feet my uncontroll'd affection. If I have love, Louiſa! notwithſtanding your ſuppos'd unkindneſs, ſpite of all the artifices practis'd to eſtrange you from me, my unalter'd heart has ſtill been your's: to the world's utmoſt limits I have carried your beloved image, the companion of each day, and the viſion of each night: to the very gates of death it has attended me; it has chear'd me in ſickneſs, cover'd me in battle, and been the guiding ſtar, by which I ſhap'd my courſe.

Lady D. O Dormer, was it light affliction to a heart like mine to be depriv'd of all it held moſt dear? In the moment of my diſappointment, when you, as I believed, renounc'd me, and departed without explanation; in that agony and conflict of my mind did they aſſail me, urge, compel me to a marriage with Lord Davenant. Why ſhould I accuſe him of unkindneſs? What could ſuch a match produce but miſery?—the efforts that I made to pleaſe him, though they coſt me dear, could not impoſe on his ſagacity; the labour'd taſks of duty poorly counterfeit the genuine glow of love.

Dorm. Now then, Louiſa, ſince your tyrant muſt eſcape unpuniſh'd, what do you reſolve on? when he has left you to the world, where will you ſeek a ſhelter?

Lady

Lady D. Where can I ſhelter, but in my former aſylum?

Dorm. Go to the wretch that ſacrificed you! No: what is this rigid arbiter, propriety, by whoſe decrees you are thus blindly govern'd?—what is this worldly idol, to whoſe bloody altars we muſt offer up our lives?

Lady D. What would you have me do? where would you have a wretched wife reſort?

Dorm. Is there no friend, whoſe faithful heart is your's?—what have I done, that I muſt be a ſecond time excluded? I have a ſiſter: may not ſhe receive you?—my fortune now is ample—oh, reflect upon my ſufferings, give me what honour can beſtow—I aſk no more.

Lady D. What ſhall I ſay?

Dorm. Do you ſtill love me?

Lady D. O Dormer, do not preſs me.

Dorm. Nay, but reſolve me—leave me not in doubt—my life is on your lips; ſilence will be my doom: I die, if you forbid it not.

Lady D. Heaven and its bleſſed angels guard your life!

Dorm. Do you ſtill love me?

Lady D. Dearer than life itſelf.

Dorm. Give me a noble proof.

Lady D. What wou'd you have me do?

Dorm. Thus, thus for ever let me claſp you to my heart!—here let me hold you. This be your aſylum! deſtin'd for each other, wedded in our ſouls, Heaven, that has re-united us,

now ſanctifies our privileg'd embrace. Spoil'd of my heart's beſt treaſure, thus, my Louiſa, by that dear lov'd name, thus thus I claim thee:—now no tyrant huſband, no baſe ſordid uncle ſhall divide us more.

Enter Sir Edmund Travers, *unperceiv'd.*

Sir Edm. Say you ſo, Sir? I'll try that point with you however.——O ſcandal to your family! is this a ſituation for a wife to be found in?

Lady D. No, I confeſs it;—your reproof is juſt.

Sir Edm. Well, Sir, and this is honourable conduct, I ſuppoſe. [*to* Dormer.]

Dorm. Sir Edmund Travers, I wou'd recommend it to you to keep your own temper, and not practiſe upon mine too far: And let me tell you, Sir, there is a mean and tricking quality in all you do. When hearts like ours are rent aſunder by device and cunning—when forgery's baſe artifice is call'd in aid to ſeparate affections, they will meet again, in ſpite of Hell itſelf: And if you have ſtolen by ſurprize upon that tender moment, when the moſt rigid virtue ſoftens to endearment, beware of falſe concluſions; nor from the foulneſs of your own imagination, judge of our's.

Sir Edm. Fine talking! but as I have not outliv'd my ſenſes; am in poſſeſſion of my eyes and ears; and have unluckily ſome intereſt in the reputation of my own niece, I ſhall take the liberty

berty of appealing to Lord Davenant againſt ſuch proceeding.

Dorm. Madam, I do beſeech you, undeceive your uncle; I ſuſpect he does not know the treatment you receive; he could not elſe thus obſtinately perſiſt to ruin you.

Lady D. Leave us together then, and I will ſpeak: retire into that room—nay, I requeſt you will. [*Exit* Dormer.] Now give me patient hearing:—'tis not from conſciouſneſs of guilt, nor to avoid a fair diſcuſſion of my ſentiments for Captain Dormer, I wou'd wiſh you to deſiſt; but from a knowledge, which you have not, of Lord Davenant's diſpoſition. You think him a kind huſband:—becauſe I've troubled you with no complaints, you think I've none to make: you are in an error; and ſo long as error caus'd content, I left you in it; now that it wou'd lead to miſery, I warn you of it's danger. My Lord and I are on the point to part: hitherto he has no ſhadow of complaint againſt me; if you reſolve to give him one, give this, report this indiſcretion, ſwell it into criminality; perhaps he'll thank you for the office; but the time will come, when you'll reproach yourſelf.

Sir Edm. And this you think will blind me;—you miſtake, I ſee your drift; I know you are unhappy with your Lord, but I alſo know it is your attachment to Dormer, and his return that make you ſo; Lord Davenant told me ſo himſelf;—the fault is all your own; you have driven

him

him mad. Now therefore, if you will ſolemnly engage your word to me never to ſee Dormer again, I'll ſtifle what is paſt; I'll ſtill acknowledge you, protect you, and if Lord Davenant then abandons you, I'll receive you in my houſe—Now what do you ſay? I put you to the proof.

Lady D. 'Tis fairly offer'd; but if every earthly comfort was in your diſpoſal, and they cou'd only be obtain'd by my renouncing abſolutely and for ever all future friendly intercourſe with that much injur'd man, I wou'd reject 'em on ſuch terms:—when I've ſaid this, I muſt implore you not to paſs unfair conſtructions on my reſolution; for if you can ſtill ſuſpect me, I will pledge my honour to you, never to receive his viſits, but in your's or other company:—will that content you?

Sir Edm. No, no, my Lady, nor cajole me neither; you'll not put out my eyes with duſt: Nothing but abſolute renunciation of that villain will ſerve me.

Lady D. Villain! do you call him villain?

Sir Edm. You'll find him ſuch to you, incorrigible!—nay, I can now perſuade myſelf you have.

Lady D. To my Lord then with what diſpatch you pleaſe. Here comes your judge; prefer your charge againſt me; I'll abide it.

Enter

Enter Lord Davenant.

Sir Edm. 'Tis well you are come, my Lord: I hope you will give me now a patient hearing.

Lord D. With ſuch attention as a man, not over-ſtor'd with patience, can command, I am prepar'd to hear you: When laſt we met, you took me in a haſty moment; if I have offended you, impute it to infirmity, and now proceed.

Sir Edm. So, ſo! he's quiet now; his phrenzy comes by fits. [*Aſide.*] When I beſtow'd this lady's hand in marriage to your Lordſhip, I had hope I gave you what wou'd make your life a happy one; had it prov'd otherwiſe, I truſted that the fault wou'd not be her's; for ſhe was born of worthy parents, carefully brought up, and educated in the habits of obedience.

Lord D. So much by way of preface; now to the point.

Sir Edm. Tho' ſhe is under the dominion of a huſband, ſtill, as her uncle and her guardian, I am intereſted in her conduct; and when I meet her on the road to ruin—when I ſurprize her lock'd in the embraces of a lover—I hold it point of honour thus to bring her face to face, and put you on your guard.

Lord D. Lock'd in the embraces of a lover! of what lover?

Sir Edm. Dormer.

Lord D. Do you call him a lover?

Sir Edm. Can you make that a queſtion? was he not ever ſuch?—you know he was. She'll not deny it; queſtion her yourſelf.

Lord D. I will not trouble you, Madam, with many interrogatories: be pleaſed to anſwer plainly. It is objected to you by your uncle that you love young Dormer.

Lady D. I have cauſe.

Sir Edm. Aſtoniſhing aſſurance! Have not I forbade you?—

Lord D. Be patient, if you pleaſe.—You loved him before you married me.

Lady D. I own it.

Lord D. You was trepanned into a marriage; not only forgery was employed, but force. Had you been left to chooſe, you would have choſen Dormer, preferably to all mankind?

Lady D. I ſhould.

Lord D. And was I now to die?—

Lady D. I beg you not to put that queſtion?

Lord D. I ſhall forbear:—It does not need an anſwer.—Why, what a criminal you make yourſelf, Sir Edmund!—You an uncle! you a guardian!—you to conſpire and league againſt a ward, whoſe happineſs you had in charge!—For my ſhare in the fraud, I do repent it from my ſoul; but I have ſome excuſe;—her beauty, fortune, were temptations in my way; ambition, avarice, deſires might urge me on: mine was an intereſted baſeneſs, your's a natural depravity!

Sir Edm. Heyday! the fit's returned; you are mad again: one and all mad. 'Tis the diſtemper of the times: it runs through the nation; hellebore can't ſtop it.

Lord D. Fly then before the infection catches you; keep the ſmall wits you have at home, nor thruſt yourſelf into the ſphere of our inſanity. When did you ever hear that interference between man and wife was thankfully received, or profitably anſwered any uſeful purpoſe?

Sir Edm. A word with you, madam, before we part:—Whatever happens, don't come near my doors; look not for your aſylum there. [*Exit.*

Lord D. Ridiculous old dotard! Suffer me to lead you to your chamber: your exhauſted ſpirits muſt demand repoſe. Give me your hand.

End of the Third ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE, *an Apartment in* Lord Davenant's *Houſe.*

Charles Davenant *and* Dormer.

Dav. I HAVE now, Captain Dormer, told you without reſerve the whole, as it has paſs'd between your ſiſter and myſelf, to the minuteſt circumſtance; and I wait your anſwer, without foreſeeing what that may be; for hitherto your ſilence has been ſuch as gives no light to gueſs at your opinion.

Dorm. I have heard your ſtory with the deepeſt attention, for it involves the fortune of an orphan ſiſter, in whoſe happineſs I am cloſely intereſted, and of whoſe reputation I am the rightful protector.

Dav. If you find any cauſe for diſcontent in my proceeding, tell it me.

Dorm. I find no cauſe whatever for complaint; but many many proofs I find of generous manly honeſty;—and thus with open arms I take you to my heart, and lodge you there till it ſhall ceaſe to beat. When I've ſaid this, I muſt confeſs to you there are ſome painful incidents in your relation. My ſiſter's marriage in Flanders I muſt conſider as precipitate and raſh; the evidence of Brooke's deceaſe at Paris was too readily admitted;

mitted; and the now distressful state of your engagement might have been avoided by those obvious precautions which your interest pointed out. Your marriage also is clandestine; such are rarely happy; and tho' Lord Davenant's consent wou'd be no recommendation of it to me, methinks it should have been an indispensable preliminary to you.

Dav. I feel the force of all you say. The vehemence of my affection may have out-stept prudence, and my want of confidence in my father may have violated duty, but towards your lovely sister I should hope I stand without reproach.

Dorm. I cannot dotibt your honotir; and you'll suffer me to add, there does not live a man on earth I should be so proud to call my brother. Here we must pause—till we have trac'd the villain out who has abus'd her confidence, and by a feign'd decease plung'd her and you in this distress and doubt, no self-indulging passion must be suffer'd to complete the yet suspended marriage—this promise you will make?

Dav. And keep religiously—As for discovery, his equipage I hope will lead to that.

Dorm. Perhaps it will; if that should be the case, remember, Captain Davenant, 'tis to me he must account. Now I'll go to my sister.

Dav. Do so:—I am sure I need not warn you to speak tenderly to Marianne: commend

me to her, chear her gentle ſpirits, and aſſuage, if poſſible, her anxious thoughts in this uneaſy criſis.

Dorm. I'll do my beſt; but ſtill my heart is heavy. Fare you well! [*Exit.*

Enter Lady Davenant.

Lady D. Was not that Dormer?

Dav. It was.

Lady D. You have told him of your marriage?

Dav. I have.

Lady D. Well, and how paſs'd it? I'm impatient to be told that you at leaſt are happy.

Dav. Happy! alas—

Lady D. What ails you? what has diſconcerted you? you have no miſunderſtanding ſure with Dormer?

Dav. With Dormer none.

Lady D. Your father then?

Dav. I have not ſeen him: this it is:—I told you Marianne had made a former marriage in Flanders; that her huſband after three months left her, went to Paris, and there died. She thought herſelf a widow; till this morning after I had left you, and with tranſport flew to embrace my bride, I found her bath'd in tears and agoniz'd with grief;—the impoſtor had deceiv'd her; he was living:—ſhe had ſeen her huſband.

Lady D. Oh horrible! her huſband living! —how have you ſupported it? what is become of her; of Dormer?—where will this affliction end?

Dav. I know not; I am now in ſearch of the betrayer.

Lady D. Have you no clue to trace him by?

Dav. I think we have; and from a circumſtance that I omitted to relate:—How now? what news?

[*A* Servant *enters, and ſpeaks aſide to* Davenant.

Lady D. Poor Davenant! how I pity thee! ſure I had weight ſufficient of affliction. How ſhall a ſorrow-broken heart ſupport ſuch overwhelming grief?

Dav. [*To the* Servant] Go to your Lady: tell her all is well. You'll find her brother with her Captain Dormer; take him aſide, and tell him to repair to me without a moment's loſs: your diligence ſhall be rewarded. Go: make haſte. [*Exit* Servant. Now the diſcovery's out—I told you Marianne had ſeen her huſband; his chariot paſſing her window was ſtopt by accident in the ſtreet; the mob and clamour uſual on ſuch occaſions attracted her notice and that of the neighbours: my ſervant now informs me 'twas the equipage of Sir Harry Harlow.

Lady D. What do you ſay? Sir Harry Harlow's!—no; it muſt not be. Revoke that word.

Dav. Revoke it! why ſhould I revoke it? no, I'll drag him to detection.

Lady D. When did this paſs, do you ſay? was it this morning, after you ſaw me?

Dav. It was: I told you that before:—what intereſts you ſo deeply for Sir Harry Harlow?

Lady D. What intereſts me! what!—O Charles—forbear to queſtion me—it ſtabs my heart:—I do beſeech you leave me to myſelf:—it turns my brain. Give me a minute's recollection. [*Walks aſide.*

Dav. Now by my ſoul, 'tis very ſtrange: it ſtaggers me. Suſpicions force upon me: nothing is more evident than her diſorder: it ſmote her like a ſtroke of death—nay, 'tis moſt palpable: her eyes are ſtaring wild with horror. Ah! 'tis ſo; ſhe loves him. Curſe upon him! he has prevail'd with her too.—Heavens! what a character is overthrown! [*Aſide.*

Lady D. Charles, Charles, you muſt be patient in this buſineſs. Do not truſt your information too implicitly; nor hurry on an explanation that you may repent of.

Dav. Muſt I be patient, Madam? muſt I permit the direſt villain to ſurvive?—and do you plead for him?—no, if my honour was not pledg'd to Dormer not to take up this affair without him, by my ſoul a moment ſhou'd not paſs before my ſword ſhou'd make its paſſage to the traitor's heart!

Lady

Lady D. What traitor's heart? you muſt not call him traitor.

Dav. Amazement! Lady Davenant, you confound me:—'tis too flagrant. Have I not proof certain?

Lady D. No, no; I tell you, wretched man, you have no proof—and when you have—

Dav. What then!—why then I'd drag him from the altar: ſtab him, tho' your fond arms protected him.

Lady D. You don't know what you ſay.

Dav. 'Tis you that ſay you know not what;—'tis you, alas! whom this confuſion painfully betrays;—you, whom a fatal weakneſs forces to protect the blackeſt of mankind. By Heaven that gave me life, I thought you late a miracle of truth and goodneſs; I approach'd you with a reverence that border'd on idolatry. I leave you now with mournful pity and regret; I go, becauſe I can no longer bear to be ſpectator of the fall of ſuch exalted virtue. [*Exit.*

Lady Davenant.

Lady D. Loſt, loſt, for ever loſt!—go, miſerable youth; enjoy the reſpite of a ſhort miſtake: the moment that clears up my innocence, lets fall deſpair on thee: what a tremendous ſcene will that unfold! a father huſband to thy wife!—It muſt be ſo: a multitude of circumſtances now confirm it:—this, this it is that ſolves the myſtery of his unnatural conduct: this is the latent

dagger

dagger of his mind: this is his horror: this the injury ſo unatoneable to Dormer. The very hour in which he took Sir Harry's equipage; his journey to the continent; his ſtay abroad, and his long ſilence, whilſt in abſence from me, riſe in horrible array, a hoſt of witneſſes, depoſing to the dreadful truth. Inextricable diſtreſs! what can be done? I ſee no light:—Fate labours as with mother's pangs, and the fell babe of horror, hell-begotten, preſſes to the birth—Father of mercies, give me thy ſupport!——Without there! who attends?

Enter Servant.

Is your Lord ſtill at home?

Serv. My Lord is in the library with Sir Harry Harlow.

Lady D. Has Captain Davenant been there?

Serv. No, Madam, he has this moment left the houſe.

Lady D. Run to my Lord, tell him to give nobody admittance till I have ſeen him; and deſire Sir Harry Harlow to come hither immediately. [*Exit* Servant.] I am not in the fault: I have not driven him to this deſperate act. Be witneſs for me, truth, I have not wilfully occaſion'd his diſguſt, but ſtudied to my utmoſt to obey and pleaſe him. If by Sir Harry's means I can hold off this fatal explanation, till Lord Davenant takes his meaſures, an inter-

view perhaps may be avoided that is horrible to think of.——I ſent to you, Sir Harry.

Enter Sir Harry Harlow.

Sir H. H. I flew with ardour at your ſummons; and I await your pleaſure, with a heart that throbs to ſerve you—with a heart, dear Lady, that can only ceaſe to love, when it ſhall ceaſe to beat.

Lady D. 'Tis well; I mean to put your friendſhip to the proof.

Sir H. H. Friendſhip indeed! but call it by what name you will; my life is your's; command it to what purpoſe you ſee fit.

Lady D. Pray don't miſtake yourſelf or me —You lent your chariot to my Lord this morning?—

Sir H. H. Madam!—

Lady D. Come, come, I know you did: I ſaw it at my door: I ſaw him enter it.

Sir H. H. Then I muſt not diſpute the point with you;—to any other queſtioner I yield no anſwer.

Lady D. 'Twill be a ſervice moſt eſſential to my happineſs, if you will conſent to ſcreen Lord Davenant for a while; I wou'd not put this on you, but for moſt preſſing reaſons; nor do I mean that any riſque or imputation thence ariſing ſhou'd ultimately fall on you: therefore, I do beſeech you for an hour or ſo that you will be inviſible to all enquirers, but above

all to Captain Dormer and Charles Davenant. Return not to my Lord, but quit this houſe immediately; and if I might prevail, you ſhou'd not enter your own for ſome time; they'll ſeek you there, and if their fury ſhall compel you to an explanation, I muſt tremble for the conſequences.

Sir H. H. Moſt amiable of women!—I perceive your drift: you act too nobly by an undeſerving huſband; but I make no appeal; implicitly I ſhall obey, becauſe 'tis your command;—and tho' my life were made the ſacrifice, what were more glorious than to die for you?—one word, one kind approving look can overpay the purchaſe; grant that before we part, and at your feet I dedicate for ever to your ſervice my devoted heart.

Enter Davenant *haſtily, followed by* Dormer.

Dav. Villain, ſtand up, and anſwer me. Now, Dormer, now will you believe me? Have we found you, Sir?

Dorm. Draw, wretch, for I am Dormer.

[*He does not draw.*

Lady D. You are mad: or ſheath your ſword, or paſs its murderous point thro' me.

Dorm. O ſhame, ſhame, ſhame! and have I liv'd to ſee it? O mortal blow to modeſty!—Let there be no fidelity in woman, no faith henceforth in man!—Come forth, thou ſhelter'd coward!

coward! anſwer with thy life: it is not for thine own enormities alone, 'tis for her's alſo thou muſt now account.

Sir H. H. I'll anſwer nothing, but to every tittle of your charge to ſay 'tis groſly falſe. Settle your own precedencies;—I am ready.

Lady D. Will you hear reaſon? Dormer, Charles, I do conjure you both, forbear!

Sir H. H. Give their rage way: they chuſe a notable occaſion in a lady's preſence to diſplay their valour!

Dorm. Our wrongs are ſuch as will not bear delay; nor will we truſt to one who can change names, ſhift perſons, counterfeit even death itſelf to ruin innocence and mock avenging juſtice.

Sir H. H. I don't know what you ſay; but ſuch aſſaſſin-like attacks deſerve no anſwer, nor admit of any explanation. You, Mr. Davenant, know me well; you know I may and will be found:—appoint your place, I'll meet you.

Dav. Follow us then!—

Lady D. Help, help!—You ſhall not ſtir.—This is too much.—You are deceiv'd; he's innocent—help, help!

[*Runs to the door, and meets* Lord Davenant.

Enter Lord Davenant.

Lord D. What is this uproar? who has frighted you?—Hah! Dormer here?—Sir Harry, what has paſs'd?

Sir H. H. Paſs'd, my Lord! nothing; all is myſtery to me.

Lord D. Why did ſhe ſcream out?—A word with you. [*Takes* Sir H. H. *aſide.*

Dav. [*To* Dormer.] Dormer, contain yourſelf; there's ſomething here that's dark and terrifying: ſay nothing to my father;—let us withdraw, and wait below; there can be no eſcape. Nay, follow me, I do conjure you.

Dorm. O Lady Davenant, reconcile my mind to this myſterious conduct, or break my heart at once. [*Exit with* Davenant.

Lady D. What then becomes of mine? it burſts diſtracted with o'erwhelming grief.

Sir H. H. Look to my Lady.—

Lady D. No, no; regard not me; I ſhall not fail; Heaven ſends me ſtrength for my appointed taſk.——Let me be private with you.

[*To* Lord Davenant.

Lord D. Not for the world:—my thoughts are terrible; I am poſſeſs'd by fiends—ſtay, and be witneſs to my ſhame, whilſt I confeſs the black accompt which I muſt paſs with Dormer: I have betray'd his ſiſter; ruin'd her by forgeries and falſehoods, as I did you, Louiſa;—married her.

Sir H. H. Infamous deed!

Lord D. Yes, Sir, there is rebellion in my blood; his ſword muſt let it out:—therefore no more, but let me paſs.

[*As he is going out,* Lady Davenant *ſtops him.*

Lady D. Hold, hold! you muſt not ſtir.

Lord D. What is't you mean? why do you croſs me thus?

Lady D. To ſave you from a meeting worſe than death.

Lord D. To ſave your lover from a meeting that may lead to death.—Oh! whilſt you live, ſpeak truth:—'tis love of Dormer raiſes this alarm. Have I not found the cauſe?

Lady D. No, you've not found the cauſe:—wou'd that you never could!

Sir H. H. Be caution'd by your Lady, and impute to her concern no other than the pureſt motive;—my life upon it, you will find it ſuch. Alas, unhappy man, what treaſure have you caſt away? Hear her, conſole her, be advis'd by her: recover, if you can, her forfeited eſteem. She is a miracle of goodneſs.

Lord D. Doſt think me ſo far ſunk in honour, as to ſhrink from this diſcuſſion? Dormer's entitled to an honourable ſatisfaction, and I ſhall give it him immediately. Before we part however, Lady Davenant, let me own that I am penetrated with remorſe for my conduct to you. Tho' I aſk nothing for myſelf, I am not out of hope that you will caſt an eye of pity and protection on that guiltleſs ſufferer, who, if I fall, will be the partner of your widowhood:—ſhe is young and beautiful; and, if your influence over Dormer is exerted in her favour, ſhe may

retrieve

retrieve the unhappy error into which I led her.—Farewell!

Lady D. Yet, yet prevent him.—Stay;—ſhe has a huſband.

Lord D. What do you tell me? ſpeak that word again.

Lady D. She has a huſband—and that huſband—how ſhall I pronounce it?—

Lord D. Go on: I'll have it, tho' it breathes deſtruction.

Lady D. That huſband is your ſon.

Lord D. Death to my ſoul!—My ſon!

Lady D. Your ſon this morning married Dormer's ſiſter.

Lord D. Why do I live a moment?

[*Lays his hand on his ſword.*

Sir H. H. Stop your raſh hand.—What phrenzy ſeizes you?

Lord D. Why does the earth not yawn, and whelm me to the centre?—Oh what a day of dreadful retribution!—Why was this marriage ſecret?—which of you was privy to it?

Lady D. I knew it not, nor had ſuſpicion of it:—few hours are paſt ſince he diſclos'd it to me.

Lord D. Fatal concealment!—horrible event!—O God, O God, into what miſery have I plung'd my ſon!—Does he know what I have done?

Sir H. H. Nor he nor Dormer know it:—take

this

this comfort alſo to your heart; it is as yet a marriage but in form: the day is not yet paſſed, in which their hands were join'd.—Heaven in its vengeance has remember'd mercy.

Lord D. Call my ſon here directly.

Lady D. There let me interpoſe again. Take a ſhort time for ſerious meditation: we will aſſiſt your thoughts. Your friend here has already ſtruck one ſpark of light amidſt your dark deſpair; patient reflection may bring more in view. Perhaps this meeting with your ſon, which you in your mind's preſent agitation are for haſtening, prudence may poſtpone.

Lord D. Speak on, for there is ſomething in your voice like comfort; ſomething that falls upon my ear, like muſic in the dead of night after diſtreſsful dreams.

Lady D. Oh! if a few calm words can lull your ear, think how repentance may aſſwage your ſoul:—for ſo much of your offence as falls on me alone, I thank Heaven's mercy for its aid, I can forgive it; nay, my Lord, I have forgiven it.

Lord D. Nay, but you muſt abhor me; darkneſs muſt be leſs oppoſite to light, than I to innocence:—ſo loathſome am I to myſelf, I ſhou'd deſpiſe the perſon that cou'd pity me.

Sir H. H. Come to your chamber; follow your guardian angel where ſhe leads you:—If I can ſerve you in this melancholy hour, command me; if I am in your way, diſmiſs me.

Lord D. I pray you leave me not—I have a thing to tell you—It is not known to man, nor can your heart conceive, how dire a deed I've had in meditation:—there was a thought ſtruck on my mind too terrible for utterance: but it is paſt: this ſtroke, that cuts up all reſource of hope, cuts up the bloody purpoſe that I had in hand. And now I feel as it were two natures:—my good and evil genius ſeem at ſtrife within me; this touches me with human kindneſs and remorſe; that tears me with deſpair and horror. How it will end I know not; for all command is loſt, and my mind drives like a wreck before the tempeſt.—Go with my Lady Davenant; ſtay by her, I beſeech you. I will retire to my chamber. Farewell!

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT

ACT V.

An Apartment in Lord Davenant's *Houſe.*

Dormer *diſcovered alone.*

Dorm. 'TIS near an hour I have waited here, and ſtill this man appears not. I ſhou'd ſuſpect he had eſcap'd me, if Davenant had not poſitively ſaid, there was no other way for him to paſs but thro' this room. No ſolitude can be more ſilent than the houſe:—they are in conference ſtill. My mind is on the rack; I am tortur'd with uncertainty—He comes——My Lady Davenant!

Enter Lady Davenant.

Lady D. Is your friend yet return'd?

Dorm. No, Madam; Captain Davenant is not yet come back.

Lady D. But you expect him ſoon?

Dorm. With every moment. Has your Ladyſhip any thing in command for him that I can deliver?

Lady D. No, Sir: my ſervants have my orders, when he comes, to beg that I may ſee him inſtantly. [*Going.*

Dorm. Stop, I beſeech you, for a moment

ſtop?! is it with him alone you will confer? am I not worthy of a word? a look?—or will you turn, but when Sir Harry kneels?

Lady D. Yes; I wou'd turn to Dormer, cou'd I ſee him.

Dorm. Am I not Dormer? is he not before you?

Lady D. To memory he is preſent, not to ſight. The picture of him in my mind is clear and ſpotleſs, trac'd with benevolence and truth and courage; it beams with candour, and it glows with love.—The picture in my eye is falſe and faded, ſmear'd by ſome ſpurious dawber, patcht, diſtorted; the open ſmile of honour wrinkled to a leer of livid jealouſy—a libel, not a likeneſs of a man. [*Exit.*

Dorm. Hear only what I have to offer: ſtay, and hear me:—ſhe's gone and gives no ear: unjuſt, diſdainful!—Hah! by my hopes, her ſcorn ſhall be repay'd—her paramour approaches—You are found, Sir—

Enter Sir Harry Harlow.

At laſt we are alone; and tho' I find you under Lady Davenant's roof, yet your protectreſs being abſent, that ſhall no longer be your ſafeguard.

Sir H. H. I own I wiſh'd to have avoided you; but ſince we are met, proceed to ſtate your charge.

Dorm.

Dorm. No wonder you ſhou'd wiſh to avoid me, for you have done a baſe unmanly injury to a defenceleſs orphan; by a pretended generoſity you ſtole into her good opinion, married and abandoned her. Baſe as this is, there is a meanneſs in the act, that makes it more deteſtable than open villainy:—you counterfeited death; paltry expedient! which not only gives your tongue the lie, but ſtamps it on your life.—Draw then! defend yourſelf; for 'tis not now a counterfeited death, but the reality, that muſt determine one of us.

Sir H. H. Take your own courſe; I ſhall repel aſſault: but firſt, by way of caution, hear me:—'Twas once my chance, as it is now, to be call'd out by a raſh angry boy, to anſwer with my ſword for an imputed injury to a lady, whom he took on himſelf to protect. I met him, for his rage was deaf to reaſon: being maſter of the ſword, I ſoon diſarmed my hot antagoniſt:—when I had given him life, I gave him proof of his miſtake:—the youth was ſatisfied, and ſav'd. A ſecond inſtance may not be ſo happy.

Dorm. I underſtand you; but the proofs, which in his inſtance follow'd, now precede our interview. You'll not deny the equipage was your's; that you was in it; that my ſiſter ſaw you, call'd out to you to ſtop: you did; but, looking out, diſcover'd her, and baſely took to flight?—theſe facts bring home to you unanſwer-

able proof, and leave you nothing but confeſſion and atonement.

Sir H. H. This arrogance compels me to an act, which, in compaſſion to your youth, and the misfortunes that hang over it, I fain would have avoided. I draw my ſword, not to anſwer to your charge, but to chaſtiſe your inſult:—Still I bear ſo little of revenge about me, that if you'll ſatisfy my honour with the leaſt apology, I promiſe you an hour ſhall not paſs before I'll clear my innocence.

Dorm. That you can never do; for if by any palliation you could hope to ſmooth away your injuries to my ſiſter, ſtill there remains a black account of crimes, which nothing but your life can expiate: Theſe eyes have ſeen you at the feet of Lady Davenant.

Sir H. H. Stop your blaſpheming tongue!—die, madman, in your error! [*They paſs at each other.*]

Marianne *runs in, followed by* Davenant.

Mar. Hold, for the love of Heaven!—Charles, Charles, beat down their ſwords! See, ſee, my brother bleeds. [Charles *interpoſes.*

Dorm. 'Tis but a ſcratch.—Stand off!

Mar. What is your quarrel? Why does he aſſault you?

Dorm. Can you aſk that? has your fright blinded you? do you not recollect that face?

Mar. I never to my knowledge ſaw that gentleman before.

Dav. I did ſuſpect this, Dormer; and on that account I brought your ſiſter with me.

Dorm. Have patience, if you pleaſe—Come hither, Marianne, look at that gentleman: Do you forget, or will you not acknowledge your huſband?

Mar. Huſband! I tell you he's a perfect ſtranger.

Dorm. If you ſay this from fear, or falſe reſpect for what may follow to affect my ſafety, you do wrong both to yourſelf and me: therefore I charge you anſwer me ſincerely and without diſguiſe.

Mar. As Heaven ſhall judge me I have ſpoke the truth.

Dorm. I'm ſatisfied:—Sir Harry Harlow, I perceive my error; and for ſo much as affects this Lady, I ſincerely aſk your pardon.

Sir H. H. So much for one of your miſtakes; there is another, which you muſt atone for:—a little patience will clear all; reſerve your ſpirits for that trial;—you now conceive the reaſon why my Lady Davenant interpos'd in my behalf: ſhe knew my innocence, and therefore ſtopt your hand; when you know her's, the ſword you pointed at my breaſt, take care you turn it not upon your own: none but the ſame defender can preſerve you.

Dorm. I own, the circumſtance of this miſtake has cleared that part of Lady Davenant's conduct;

duct; it only now remains to account why you was found upon your knees before her.

Sir H. H. How elſe ſhould I approach her? When you know all her virtues, you will worſhip too:—the preſence of an angel muſt demand our knees.—But you are wounded, Sir; you bleed.

Dorm. 'Tis nothing; a mere ſcratch; your point juſt glanc'd upon my arm.

Sir H. H. 'Tis well it is no worſe. Good night to you! [*Going.*

Dav. Before you go, one word with you, Sir Harry—I am certainly inform'd the perſon we are now in ſearch of was in your chariot this morning, when an accident ſtopt it in the ſtreet where this Lady lives: I demand of you as a man of honour to inform me who that perſon is.

Sir H. H. When you take that for granted, Charles, which I have not admitted, and thereon ground a queſtion I'm not bound to anſwer, you muſt give me leave to ſay, you have already had the only ſatisfaction I ſhall give. I have been once arraign'd, am now acquitted, and ſhall no longer plead to interrogatories.

Dav. Permit me then to tell you, Sir—

Sir H. H. No, tell me nothing I ought not to hear; for I regard you much too well to ſtart a quarrel with you;—rather let me tell you, Charles, what you ſhould hear, and thank me for

for—you and your friend there have arraign'd a lady perfect in all goodneſs, conſtruing the pureſt motives into criminality. I ſee her coming, and ſhall leave you this fair opportunity to make atonement: when you have done that, if you have any farther difference to compoſe with me, I ſhall attend your call when, where, and how you pleaſe. [*Exit.*

Enter Lady Davenant.

Dav. But that I know your heart, I ſhould deſpair of pardon; ſuffer me to hope you will forgive my moſt unjuſt ſuſpicion, and receive into your favour my beloved Marianne.

Lady D. This is the Lady—if I ſurvey her for a while with melancholy admiration I ſhall not offend:—is this a form to combat rude miſfortune? that it ſhould enter in the heart of man to injure ſuch a creature! that artifice and wrong might be employ'd to gain her I can comprehend, but that they ſhould be a reſource for leaving her, ſurpaſſes my conception: I find till now imagination could not reach the guilt of her betrayer.—Give me your hand, my dear, you come into a melancholy houſe: I cannot welcome you as I would wiſh.

Mar. And cauſe there is for melancholy; wherever I am preſent, it purſues me: I am the bitter fountain of your ſorrow. My fatal marriage with this noble youth has been the bane and poiſon of your peace. I pray you ſend me

hence; diſmiſs me like a thing abhorr'd; a peſtilence, that, if you harbour it, will pay your hoſpitality with death.

Lady D. Not ſo; misfortune ſtrengthens your intereſt in my heart. You have more claims upon me than you know of. You are ſtill married in your heart to Davenant; ſo was I once to Dormer.

Dorm. Oh! I ſhall ſink with ſhame.

Lady D. Had I been, as you are, thus wretched, thus betray'd, nor wife nor widow, but a nameleſs orphan, the ſport of villainy, affliction's victim — you had a brother once, in whoſe brave heart I ſhou'd have rais'd that pity you excite in mine.

Dorm. Oh, plead for me, ſome friend! I dare not ſpeak.

Lady D. No, Dormer, no: when I forgive, you ſhall not owe it to an advocate:—but let that reſt; things of more moment preſs.—You muſt not ſee your father. [*to* Davenant.]

Dav. Why not? your words alarm me.

Lady D. His ſituation would alarm you more: ſome ſtrange diſorder ſuddenly has ſeiz'd him.

Dav. Say rather ſome ſtrange paſſion of the mind.—You told him of my marriage?—

Lady D. I did, and he receiv'd it like a ſtroke of death; his frame convuls'd with paſſion.—I muſt for ever lament your not conſulting him.

Dav. Does he reſent it highly?

Lady

Lady D. We'll talk of that hereafter; for the preſent you muſt avoid an interview. If you remain in the houſe, retire to your own chamber, and let her accompany you;—take Mr. Dormer with you too.—Go, my dear child, go with your friend—ſo you may call him ſtill.

Mar. My heart's too full to utter what it feels.—In the expreſſive language of your eyes I read my melancholy fate.—Farewell!

[*Exit with* Davenant.

Lady D. Well, Sir, you'll follow that unhappy pair;—or do you wait to ſpring ſome new deteſtion?—*Fie upon you!*—What blemiſh does your ſcrutinizing eye diſcover, that you ſo ſtedfaſtly peruſe me over?—Oh, that a taint ſo ſickly as ſuſpicion ſhould find admittance in a hero's breaſt!

Dorm. [*runs to* Lady Davenant, *and falls at her feet*] Hear me, divine Louiſa, hear your repentant Dormer:—let me kneel for pardon.

Lady D. Riſe, riſe!—this is no time for explanation.

Dorm. Stop not my words, now they have found their way, but let me pour them and my tears, thus kneeling at your feet.—Before my eyes loſe ſight of you, confirm my pardon; tell me you forgive what my impatient phrenzy, what my mad ſuſpicion utter'd.—Penitence ne'er ſtruck a human heart more deep than mine.—Dæmons have curs'd the ſun, I have done more—I have arraign'd thy virtue.

Lady D. Riſe, I deſire you, riſe! you have my full forgiveneſs.

Dorm. Oh! firſt and laſt ſole object of my heart! how can I thank thee as I ought?

[*Kiſſes her hand.*

Lady D. If to regain and keep your place in my affection is your wiſh, ſpare the attempt to thank me, nor by this warmth of paſſion draw aſide my thoughts from the ſad theme that fills them. That I have lov'd you, Dormer, and ſtill love, ſuperior to diſguiſe, accept my free confeſſion; but when example meets me of the precipitancy of paſſion in Davenant's caſe; of the deceitfulneſs of gratitude in Marianne's; I will be guided only by eſteem; and on your delicacy, on your diſcretion in this mournful criſis will depend, if that affection which I now acknowledge ſhall ſubſiſt or ceaſe.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Lord Davenant *and* Paget.

Lord D. The air is freſher here: motion revives me.

Paget. I wiſh it may: and yet your colour changes; your eyes look heavy, and betoken pain.

Lord D. I've wearied them with writing. Take the papers—This to my ſon; to Lady Davenant this; and this to Dormer.——Ah!

Paget. What's that? another pang?—and now

it ſhakes you like an ague fit: pray be perſuaded; let your phyſician be ſent for.

Lord D. What can he do? my wounds are in the ſoul. Give me your arm.

Paget. How cold your hand is on me!

Lord D. No matter: 'twill paſs off.—I'm better now. Make all things ready. I will be gone to night.

Paget. How can you travel with theſe pains upon you?

Lord D. I ſhall feel no pains upon my journey.

Paget. I fear, my Lord, you are not fit to undertake your journey.

Lord D. I fear ſo too:—but, be that as it may, let me have all things ready. Have you put up thoſe parchments for my ſon?

Paget. They are in the box, ſeal'd and directed for Mr. Davenant.

Lord D. That's very well—now tell my Lady that I deſire to ſee her.—A word with you before you go:—You will find I have not forgot your ſervices; they wou'd have done credit to a better cauſe; but as I have put you now above neceſſity, I hope I have put you above meanneſs alſo.

Paget. It has not been my choice, but my misfortune. I ſhall ſend Lady Davenant to you, and hope ſhe will prevail with you to poſtpone your journey. [*Exit.*

Lord Davenant.

Lord Dav. My journey muſt be quickened,

not poſtponed. — This medicine works too ſlowly;—but here's a remedy of more diſpatch: —Apply it then!—Miſery like mine acquits the ſuicide; when law ſtrikes ſhort, juſtice ſhould arm the culprit's hand.—The occaſion's apt:— In death there's but one pang, in life a thouſand thouſand multiplied calamities.—Now, now I'll do it.—Hah! I'm interrupted.

Enter Lady Davenant.

Lady D. I am told you have been ſeized with ſudden indiſpoſition;—what is the matter?— How are you affected?—Are you reſolved upon departing immediately?

Lord D. I am reſolved: my mind is gone before me; and when I am departed, I ſhall bequeath you to your heart's firſt choice.

Lady D. What do you meditate?—Your words, your looks are ominous. What was that thing you huddled in your boſom, as I entered? —My Lord, my Lord, beware of ſelf-deſtruction!—Your boſom labours, your breath flutters, and your eyes—Oh horrible! what are theſe ghaſtly ſymptoms?

Lord D. If any conſolation could have reſcued me, thine would have been the medicine of my mind;—thou would'ſt have been the ſaving angel, thou moſt excellent, moſt injured of women!—But I have ſate in council with my reaſon, ranſack'd all the reſources of my ſoul, and queſtioned every riſing thought, if it could ſhow me hope:—In all my compoſition, there is not one trace; night and deſpair poſſeſs me, and there is nothing like a ray of light, ſave only what

what the mortal drug adminiſters, that now is ſapping the ſtrong-hold of life.

Lady D. Poiſon!—Oh let me fly, and bring you inſtant help.

Lord D. Hold, I command you:—Aſſiſtance is too late; nor would I ſuffer it, if it came.—'Sdeath! I were a beaſt without a ſoul;—I, that have kept my ſtation with the higheſt, now to ſink where infamy won't own me;—the outcaſt of ſociety, the pointing-ſtock of ſcorn, and feed on offal ſcraps of pity, thrown by charitable fools, to comfort me!—it is not to be borne!—Deſpair ſeized me, and I took poiſon.

Lady D. Be not extreme with him in judgment, merciful Diſpoſer!—He comes, but not in confidence:—deſpair compels him.

Lord D. I thank you.—O Louiſa! beſt of women!—if I had confidence to pray, it ſhould be for ſuch bleſſings on your future days, as might redeem and recompence your ſufferings paſt. And yet I'll ſtrive—Oh horrible! it muſt not be.—My ſoul is rent with agony:—Methought, as I looked up, I ſaw a thouſand threatening faces, that forbade my prayer. Oh hide me in your arms!—Stand off again! leſt I infect and ſtain your purity with my unholy touch.—Bleſt may you be! thrice bleſt in Dormer's arms!—May Heaven ſhower down on your united hearts perpetual harmony and love! And for the hateful barrier of my life, thus, thus I burſt it—

[*Stabs himſelf, and ſhe catches his arm.*

Lady

Lady D. Ah!

Lord D. Let go my arm! my ſoul is in a loathſome priſon, and this ſtroke delivers it.

[*Stabs again, and drops on one knee, holding the dagger ſtill in his hands.*

Lady D. Help! for the love of Heaven, ſome help!—

Enter Davenant, *and at another door* Servants.

O Charles! your father has deſtroy'd himſelf.

Dav. Merciful God! he is dying.

Lady D. The agonies of death are on him. Aſſiſt me to take him off:—I can't ſupport him;—he will die upon the floor.

Lord D. Yes, yes, 'tis over!—tell not my ſon the cauſe till I am dead. This was the only kindneſs I could ſhew him. I am ſorry to preſent a ſpectacle ſo bloody to you both: but poiſon work'd too ſluggiſhly, nor could I bear its agonies—oh keep her from the ſight of me!—ſhe comes—

Enter Marianne, *followed by* Dormer.

Mar. What have we here? Oh horrible! what dying man is this?

Lord D. Oh hide me! cover me with clouds: I ſink, I die—have pity for me, Heaven!——'tis paſt. [*Dies.*

Mar. Let me come to him: let me ſee his face. 'Tis he! avenging Heaven! it is my huſband.

Dorm. Lord Davenant your huſband!—complicated miſery!

Dav. Her huſband, and my father!

Lady D.

Lady D. The horrid myſtery is ſolv'd.

Mar. Then let me die;—let my heart burſt at once, and bury me for ever in oblivion.

Lady D. No, whilſt my arms, my friendſhip can uphold you, you ſhall never fall.—Come from the body, Charles:—ceaſe to contemplate that bloody object.

Dav. Nay, but be ſilent—it is done—he's dead.—I will be dumb henceforth; but have ſome care of me, for if my reaſon fails, and not remembering he was my father, I ſhou'd ſhock nature's hearing with a curſe, 'twill be the brain's depravity, and not the heart's.

Lady D. Alas, unhappy friends, my ſpirits will not ſerve to give you conſolation; but let us patiently await, and it will come from Heaven:—the ſame diſpenſing hand, that to the blameleſs boſom deals the wound, will in its own good time adminiſter the cure.

THE END.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Miſs YOUNGE.

TO-night two ſketches we've held up to view,
One of the old ſchool, t'other of the new.
As for my Lady's portrait, I can't boaſt
Its likeneſs, for the original is loſt:
In times foregone the colouring might be good,
But now it ſcarce reſembles fleſh and blood:
The pencil's chaſte—but where, I wou'd demand,
Are the ſoft touches of a modern hand?
Where the fond languiſh that our maſters ſteal?
The tempting boſom that our dames reveal?
Where the high plume that ſpeaks the towering ſoul?
Where the bright gloſs that varniſhes the whole?
The habit regimental, ſmart cockade,
And the neat ankle roguiſhly diſplay'd?
None, none of theſe—a piece of mere ſtill life,
Where not one feature marks the modern wife.

Lay the good dame aſide—and now behold
My Lord appears!—Theſe tints are freſh and bold;
This is the life itſelf. Mark! what a grace
Beams in his high-born tyranny of face!
He breathes; he ſpeaks. Cards, harlots, horſes, dice
Croud the back-ground with attributes of vice:
This, this is ſomething like; theſe colours give
Some ſemblance of a man: 'Tis ſo we live,
'Tis ſo we look, *you cry—behold once more!*
The ſuicide is welt'ring in his gore.
Hah! does it ſtrike you? ſay, do you ſtill cry,
'Tis ſo we live?—*ſo live, and ſo you'll die.*

But one word more on Lady Davenant's *part,*
We hope 'tis Nature; you believe it Art.
Search your own boſoms; if you find her there
'Tis well: if not, I wou'd to Heaven ſhe were!

H. 1
Cumberland

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